52

SUCCESSFUL LIVING

582
* 650-1
CHU

Eustace Chesser

S. NU - 717

Penguin Books
HARMONDSWORTH
MIDDLESEX

420
S
717

FIRST PUBLISHED 1952

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
FOR PENGUIN BOOKS LTD
BY HUNT, BARNARD AND CO, LTD

18, 11, 176

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTORY

PART I

The Principles of Life and the Beginning of Self-Knowledge

1. PLANNING YOUR LIFE ANEW: *Who are You?:* The Mystery of Identity – Influence of Heredity and Environment – Free Will or Determinism? – *What are You?:* The Centre of Your World? – Giant or Worm? – 'The Creature with Choice' – *Where are You?:* The Material State – The Spiritual State – Daydreams as Compensation – The Value of 'Divine Discontent' – Your First Cross-Examination of Self 15

2. THE BASIS OF CONTENTMENT: Definition of Terms – Dr Joad on Good and Evil – Social Restraint upon Primitive Instinct – Self-Discipline Essential – *What is Success? – What is Living? – What is Successful Living?:* The Achievement of Harmony – Perfectment from Within – The Nature of Man – The Unity of Life – 'For Whom the Bell Tolls' 24

3. YOUR THREE-FOLD NATURE – BODY, MIND OR SPIRIT?: Results of Unbalance – Control or Repression? – HAVE YOU INNER HARMONY?: The Three Ways of Division – THE PRACTICAL BASES OF INNER HARMONY: High Aim and Imperfect Achievement – The First Steps in Self-Understanding 35

4. ARE YOU 'IN HARMONY' WITH YOUR BODY? HAVE YOU A STRONG SENSE OF SHAME OF NAKEDNESS? – Suppression of Infant Impressions – ARE YOU DEEPLY EMBARRASSED BY THE NECESSITY TO ACKNOWLEDGE PHYSICAL NEEDS IN SOCIAL LIFE? Necessity knows no 'morality' – The Body Beautiful, Healthy and Useful – HAVE YOU ANY FEAR OR SHAME REGARDING MARRIAGE INTIMACIES?: Reproduction necessary and

right – Importance of early teaching – COMMONSENSE AND THE BODY 42

5. ARE YOU 'IN HARMONY' WITH YOUR MIND?: HAVE YOU A STRONG FEELING THAT YOU ARE THE INTELLECTUAL INFERIOR (OR SUPERIOR) OF MOST PEOPLE YOU KNOW? – Natural inequalities – Dangers of 'brightness' and 'dullness' – DO YOU BELIEVE THAT HIGH INTELLECTUAL ATTAINMENT EXCUSES GROSS FAULTS OF CHARACTER?: The temptation of the 'Intellectual' – DO YOU FEEL THAT REASON AND LOGIC ARE THE ONLY TRUE GUIDES TO CONDUCT?: 'Crime and Punishment' – COMMONSENSE AND THE MIND 50

6. ARE YOU 'IN HARMONY' WITH YOUR SPIRIT?: Impossibility of escaping spiritual activity – difficulty of keeping inner balance – DO YOU TEND TO TAKE IT UPON YOURSELF TO JUDGE OTHERS?: Judgement of others as an indication of inner guilt – Judgement of others needs more information than we have – DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR BELIEFS (RELIGIOUS, PHILOSOPHICAL OR POLITICAL) ARE THE ONLY TRUE GUIDE IN LIVING?: Human liability to bigotry – 'squaring' the conscience – DO YOU KEEP RELIGION FOR SUNDAYS, OR TRY TO APPLY YOUR BELIEFS IN DAILY LIVING?: Our frequent failures – Need to eliminate complacency – COMMONSENSE AND THE SPIRIT 59

PART II

The Application of Self-Knowledge in the Daily Conduct of Life

7. HOW TO ATTEMPT A 'PERSONAL ASSESSMENT': What is our Goal? – Can we Change Our 'Selves'? – The Common Nature of our Fears and Aspirations – HOW TO USE A 'PERSONAL ASSESSMENT': Its applications in adjustment to life – the danger of innate 'Bias' – Childhood Training – bad and good – Social behaviour, in public, business and sexual contacts 69

8. THE SUM OF YOUR 'PERSONAL ASSESSMENT' – I. (i) *When things go wrong, am I inclined to blame others?* Reasons for leniency with Self – The various avoidable ill-effects of this weakness – (ii) *Am I as generous with praise as with criticism?:* Reasons for niggardliness in praise – usefulness of restraint in criticism – Need for judgement in ending forbearance – (iii) *When worried, do I tend to vent my irritability on others?* 77

9. THE SUM OF YOUR 'PERSONAL ASSESSMENT' – II. (iv) *Do I always try to understand the other person's point of view?:* Possessive price in our viewpoint – Habit as a factor in prejudice – primitive reactions demonstrated in argument – (v) *Am I prepared, having seen the other person's point of view, to give up my own if it was wrong?:* Distinction between views held *personally* and those held *impersonally* – (vi) *Am I able to learn from experience, or am I inclined to repeat my mistakes?:* Learning from others' experience – Parents and Children – Action dictated by character – Find the inner weakness causing error 85

10. THE SUM OF YOUR 'PERSONAL ASSESSMENT' – III. (vii) *If thwarted, do I flare up, sulk or make the best of things?:* Infantile reactions to restraint – The sign of emotional maturity – (viii) *Am I able to carry on even after temporary set-backs?:* The example of the truly handicapped – How to use the 'sense of inadequacy' for your own purpose – (ix) *Can I recognize without envy that others are superior to myself in certain branches of knowledge or activity?:* Men are not born equal – one-sided brilliance still incompleteness – (x) *Can I, recognizing my own limitations, continue to work steadfastly for the best use of my personal talents?:* The 'ego-ideal' as both incubus and spur 97

11. THE SUM OF YOUR 'PERSONAL ASSESSMENT' – IV. (xi) *Can I accept responsibility without too much self-doubt and without over-reaching myself?:* Employer or employed? – Life's responsibilities – The sense of in-

adequacy again – (xii) *Do I tend to 'yearn for the moon'?:* Fantasy natural to childhood – False values of modern Society – (xii) *Have I a reasonable, practical ambition; an 'impossible' ambition; or none at all?:* What means fulfilment for you? The attainable goal – (xiv) *Am I truly considerate towards those who have to live and work with me, recognizing their feelings to be as important as my own?* Common human-nature – Making 'advances' – Prickly 'principles' – The 'Social lie' – (xv) *When necessary, am I prepared to make a personal sacrifice?:* Big crises and small – 'Making use of' our friends – Our debt to life 111

12. THE SUM OF YOUR 'PERSONAL ASSESSMENT' – V. (xvi) *Do I honestly regard men and women as equal but different?:* Sex in its context – Effects of early training – The 'unwilling mother' – Sex as the normal basis of life – (xvii) *Am I fully ready for marriage?* or *Am I 'pulling my weight' in my marriage?:* Marriage defined – Marriage as a microcosm of Life – Sex in Marriage – Training for Marriage 123

13. THE SUM OF YOUR 'PERSONAL ASSESSMENT' – VI. (xviii) *Am I, on balance, a success or a failure in (a) my inner life, (b) my family life, (c) my married life, (d) my working life, (e) my life as a citizen?:* Balance more important than one-sided success – The root of success is in your self – (xix) *Have I, in making this assessment, really recognized my bad as well as my good points?:* Primitive instincts non-moral – harnessing the primitive 'drive' – (xx) *Am I prepared to make some real effort towards improvement?:* 'Facing the facts' is no fun! – Normal human content the goal 133

14. THE REASONABLE GOAL: (i) *Our Goal in Personal Life:* Affection, given and received – Possessiveness – 'Romance' – Childhood as the time of training to live – Family life the important 'profession' – (ii) *Our Goal in Business Life:* Technical skill *plus* – Self-understanding as the key to others' reactions – (iii) *Our Goal in Community Life:* Individual and Community – Have you

really got Free Will? – The understanding and control of primitive impulse 139

POSTSCRIPT. THE WORLD AND YOU: Danger of concentration upon Self – Nature's lesson of co-operation – Sex in communal life – The family and the tribe – 'EQUALITY' AND 'FREEDOM': The 'division of labour' – Men not born equal – the 'caste system' – classes and conflicts – Slavery – CHANGING IDEALS: New aims, new systems – What is 'Progress'? – Religion and revolution – Industrialism and Exploitation – THE CLASS STRUGGLE: Self-preservation or Community-preservation? – Mutual Aid our aim – WAR: Murder, private and public – LACK OF UNDERSTANDING AND CONFLICT BETWEEN NATIONS – IMMATURITY OF NATIONS – WHAT YOU CAN DO 148

Introductory

THE present work arises directly from its immediate predecessor, *Grow Up and Live.* The inspiration is not however wholly mine, being prompted, though he could not know it, by Mr R. A. Butler, the former Minister of Education, to whom I am already indebted for the frank introductory note with which the earlier book was prefaced.

Among other searching comments upon that manuscript, Mr Butler objected to the inclusion of one whole section, of some 20,000 words, as being out of place in a book intended primarily for the young person seeking guidance at the start of life. I felt Mr Butler's objection to be valid, and the section was omitted. Yet there remained the feeling that although its content went beyond the purpose of that volume, yet there were things in it which should be said, and whose pointedness to present-day conditions made it necessary that they should be said.

So began the idea of a further book which, though complete in itself, should be in a very close sense a continuation of the earlier one.

Grow Up and Live was written primarily for the use of children and young persons. In some instances it was necessary to simplify issues, and to use simple non-technical language, in order that it might be easily understandable. Yet that did not make it in any sense exclusively a children's book; since it contained, I believe, much which might be helpful to the parent.

Similarly, I should like to think that the present book, which starts where the earlier one left off, will not be inaccessible or unintelligible to the intelligent child, although written primarily for adults.

EUSTACE CHESSER.

London, W.1

PART I

The Principles of Life and the Beginning of Self-Knowledge

Chapter 1

*

PLANNING YOUR LIFE ANEW

WHAT would you do if you wanted to build a house, start a career, or undertake any enterprise? Surely you would first of all assess your resources, then draw up plans – real plans, which could be seen on paper – and then, before you began to build, lay the foundations.

Planning a life is very much like planning any other enterprise, though only too often it is not until we have floundered about for a good many years that we begin to realize it. When we do, the time has come to assess our resources, draw up plans, lay foundations, and, with great effort, to begin to build.

Your resources include your mental and physical endowment, and what you have made of them so far; inheritance and training of character, and what you have made of them so far; plus the material conditions in which you live and work at the present time.

Your plans should be long-term and short-term; the first, the goal you would like to reach in ten to fifteen years' time, and the second, the point at which you would like to arrive within the next few years. Their choice should be based upon your present resources – or, rather, something just a little way beyond your assessment of present resources, to give the effort spice, and to spur you on to further development.

What of the *foundations*? Preparing them will include the overhaul of your resources, so that you do not start to build on faulty material. People get stuck at one point, without further development, far more often through faults of character, or defective equipment, than through lack of

capital or opportunity. In fact, what is wrong with most of us – in personal and in working life – is the lazy complacency which prevents our really taking pains with the tiny details which mean so much.

Let us stir out of our possible apathy by a frank survey of *who*, *what* and *where* we are:

WHO ARE YOU?

It is in its way a little miracle that each of us feels so definitely that he is himself. You may answer in a commonsense way – that he could hardly be anything else. Yet is it not remarkable that each of the millions on millions of human beings who have lived through the ages has been quite separate and identifiable from all the rest?

Each of us, physically, is built to much the same plan. The character of each shares the same basic instincts, desires, and reactions with the others. Surely, then, the 'infinite variety' of our race is a matter for wonder, although it is one of those wonders we daily take quite for granted. Yet it is plain also that each of us must be separate and different, though related and similar to everyone else. For what we are is determined by the interaction of two separate and varied lines of heredity, physical and mental, together with the influence of a purely individual experience.

Even in the case of most closely-related persons, the conditions surrounding their individual conception and birth, and their upbringing, may be subject to such diverse influences that their development is quite different. This is seen every day in the dissimilarity which often exists between children of the same parents.

The 'I' in you is at once individual and common. You have every right to be proud of your individuality, and every reason to be humble before the individuality of others. Here is an example of the 'dual principle' found in all phases of life and being. You have inherited certain traits or tendencies,

which have been modified in their development by circumstances, and possibly by your personal will and intelligence.

Thus, for example, a person may inherit a solitary and melancholic temperament. Let him be brought up without love in some gloomy institution, and that tendency will be so confirmed as to affect the whole course of his life. Let him, on the other hand, be brought up in a loving, cheerful atmosphere, and the original heritage will be modified so that he may attain a balanced character.

Even in adverse circumstances, it may be that a process of compensation will take place on an unconscious level, bad heritage and environment being overcome by instinctive movement in the other direction, as a flower grows upwards to the sun. More likely, however, the handicapped person, if his intelligence is great enough, may later decide for himself that certain aspects of his character are preventing his development into a complete and successful human being. Then, if his will be strong enough to carry out the decisions of his intelligence, he may still be able by his own effort to modify the effects of both heredity and environment.

So we reach another 'duality' – the principles of Free Will and Determinism, which are usually represented as being opposed to each other.

Religious and mystical thinkers in the main take their stand upon the principle of Free Will, holding that each individual is fully responsible for his actions. Materialists, on the other hand, argue that the individual's actions, and even those views which lead direct to his actions, are *determined* by mechanical reflexes.

It has been said, from this basis, that Free Will is a necessary postulate of Ethics, and Determinism of Science – for plainly there can be no system of Ethics if the individual has no ultimate moral responsibility for his actions; nor can there be any system of Science which does not rest solidly upon the law of Cause and Effect. Yet I believe there is a field

in which these two seeming irreconcilables can meet, and that that field is the human spirit.

Disease of body or brain apart, there is a point at which the determination of our individual growth through heredity and environment gives way before the free choice of the will. Where that point is, and whether the individual may even develop so far as to reach it, depends upon circumstances – in very large measure, the strength and sincerity of our attempt to see and judge ourselves clearly.

So, in deciding *who* you are, you must first take into account your hereditary endowment.

Secondly, you must consider your early environment and present circumstances, and the effects they may have had in confirming or modifying your heredity.

Thirdly, you should examine frankly and dispassionately whether the product of this heredity and this environment is in every sense as satisfactory a person as he might have been. This is the most difficult task of all.

WHAT ARE YOU?

Our basic instinct is the instinct for self-preservation. As a result of its workings, each of us has the feeling that the world centres on ourselves. Intellectually, of course, we know that this is not so.

Sometimes children are brought up so badly, that this natural bias to egocentricity is deeply confirmed in them. When circumstances teach them the lesson, they may suffer very bitterly and even become warped. Owing to the deep confirmation of the instinctive feeling, they do not usually learn the later lesson in any way except intellectually, giving it in their own lives only lip-service and seldom acting upon it. That is why childhood as a member of a normal family is so desirable.

Of course, when we have true affection for another human being, even the most hardened of us is inclined to put that

person's interest before our own. I am afraid, though, that in many cases this is only because in some sense we identify the loved being with ourselves – so far from being cured of ingrained egocentricity, we have merely extended its scope to include our 'property'.

What we are should, if truly realized, give us equal ground for pride and humility, in much the same way as real understanding of *who* we are. For each of us is a human being, with reason in that very fact to be both proud and humble.

There have been times in the world's history when the human race believed itself god-like, in the sense that everything else was created for its use and pleasure. Men gave too easy and flattering an interpretation to the statement that God created man 'in his own image'. For this image as we see it in the moment of time which is mankind's past and present is surely both tiny and distorted. Yet it may well be capable of growth in size and value

There have been times – especially in recent generations – when, in reaction, men have looked at the immensity of Creation and likened the human race to an ant-heap or a colony of worms, whose doings could have no significance in Space and Time. Surely – once more – the truth is a dual truth.

Mankind is dwarfed by limitless space and time. We can easily excuse our faults and follies and refuse to experience our sorrows by pleading that 'It'll all be the same a hundred years hence.' Yet in the boundlessness of space and time, these miserable little creatures which inhabit one small planet and have so often committed immense wrongs against one another and against the other creatures on it – these creatures only, to our best knowledge, are endowed with a spark of god-like intelligence.

The galaxies of stars may fill us with awe. But they are unable to feel even contempt for us. Infinite time may make a mockery of our life-times, short as the may-fly's in comparison. Yet Time itself is deaf and dumb and blind, while

we can leave the record of our experience and of our thought for distant ages to discover.

Perhaps this is the secret of our difference from all else which we certainly know to exist: that we are, in fact, that point at which Determinism and Free Will meet. At the end of the chain of Causality has come the creature with Choice. The story of Adam and Eve perhaps symbolizes that discovery, or even its first unconscious realization by earlier men.

So, again, in realizing *what* we are, we may be at once proud and humble. In our humility, we should acquire a better sense of proportion, so that we no longer act upon the assumption that what happens to ourselves is all-important. Yet in our pride we may believe that what we are and what we do has great significance.

WHERE ARE YOU?

The way in which you may begin to plan your own successful living will depend to a large extent upon your realization of *where* you stand, materially and spiritually, at the present time.

You may be rich, by inheritance or by achievement. You may be poor, by inheritance, ill fortune, bad judgement, or bad behaviour. You may be content and fulfilled – which is spiritual riches – and this I think is likely to be largely due to your own effort. You may be discontented and unfulfilled in any of a number of ways, from any of a number of causes.

There are two sets of alternative conditions – one relating to material, the other to spiritual circumstances – into which you should roughly be able to fit your own present state. Think it over carefully, and decide where you stand.

In the material state – perhaps you are poor.

Poverty is not in itself the worst evil, though the results of continual poverty without hope can be vicious in the extreme. Yet unless we are saints we are justified in trying to escape it.

Is it possible for you to better your position? If, for

example, you are in work in which you could rise, what are the causes which are holding you back? Do they lie in your choice of work, your attitude to your work, or your attitude to those for whom and with whom you work?

If this is your problem, ask yourself these questions honestly *before* you blame bad luck and the unfairness of others.

Riches are not the greatest good. Inevitably they bring responsibility and worry. The rich man's balance sheet has always a heavy debit side.

Have you, perhaps, become so wound up in your wealth that you have lost the power of simple enjoyment and the opportunity of honest human relationships? Have you lost sight of the fact that the first rule of life is that nothing is given for nothing?

Before you groan about your lot as one of the 'poor rich', or when you catch yourself out in discontent, ask yourself whether you have forgotten that wealth has only two justifications: as a trusteeship which should spread around it a widening circle of benefit; and as the means to live with taste and distinction.

Now we come to *the spiritual state*, more difficult for most of us to assess, since all have their moments of crisis, their sudden blows and equally sudden gifts from Fate. This spiritual state will almost certainly be involved with the material – though very frequently not in the obvious way which one might think at first glance.

Content and fulfilment are possible to the great majority of us – yet those who attain them are rare. Among rich and poor alike are to be found the disappointed, the discontented, those who feel themselves thwarted in one sphere or another of life.

Many people try to compensate for what they have not – in riches, status, and even affection – by continuing into adult life the daydreams which were natural to the child. Yet with comparatively small effort they might fix for themselves a

positive goal, which, though less than they have in fantasy, would yet be more than present reality. With still a little more effort, they could gain it.

Worse even than this, many of us neglect to enjoy what we have in reality through a yearning for something different, probably quite out of reach. Why yearn for rare exotic blossoms when your garden is full of roses?

'Divine discontent' is good when it inspires us to adventure in unexplored fields, in much the same way as the instinct of self-preservation works to good purpose when it causes us to make the sudden leap which saves us from being crushed by a falling rock. But just as our expression of the latter instinct can, and very frequently does, degenerate into mere selfishness, so can discontent degenerate into a foolish refusal to appreciate the good things life has brought us.

If you really know *who* you are, you know what you need and what you can do.

If you really know *what* you are, you will have a sense of proportion, taking minor disappointments with humour but believing that all things are possible.

Try then to find out what it is in the *where you are* which is at the root of your discontent.

You lack opportunity? Have you really tried to fit yourself for it, and to find it when you are ready?

You lack human affection? Have you given it, even where it was not returned, and gone on giving it in face of disappointment?

You lack friends? Have you shown friendliness and consideration for the feelings of others?

You are misunderstood? Have you shown understanding?

You lack confidence? Have you tried to inspire others with confidence in you?

You are a failure, in work or in love? Is it not the truth that you failed before you even started, because of some fault or lack in yourself?

Only when you have asked yourself these questions and answered them honestly, will you be able to start to plan and perhaps re-make your life.

Some people who have got their lives into a positive mess, or who vaguely feel that they are just drifting along and sum up their depression in the phrase 'Life isn't worth living', will consult a psychiatrist and expect him to do everything for them – as if his touch or his words were magic. This is mere superstition, as unreasonable and as useless as the belief that a rabbit's paw will ward off ill-luck. Twentieth-century superstition, maybe, but no less superstition for that.

The psychiatrist may help in many ways. He can usually succeed – with full co-operation – in disentangling the muddled personality, helping the person concerned to see *why* and *how* such muddle has come about. He can never, unaided, put everything right by a mere wave of the hand. Ultimately, it rests with the individual whether or not he will make a success of his life.

Have you the courage and perseverance which are needed? Go to it then.

Chapter 2

*

THE BASIS OF CONTENTMENT

It would not be unreasonable, before we go any farther, to try to define what we mean by the terms 'successful' and 'living'.

I myself have always regarded the two words together as meaning the full and complete expression of the individual personality against the background of the larger community – leading to harmony and contentment within and without.

Dr Joad, however, has questioned this, pointing out, not without justice, that if the individual personality contains evil, the expression of that part of it must be evil, leading to evil works – actions, that is, injurious to others and ourselves.

Expression of the individual personality must therefore also include self-discipline, so that it is the 'best self' –'best' in relation to other people, to society and to our own highest development – which is exercised.

It should be said here that our more aggressive instincts are not in their own nature *wrong*, any more than any natural instinct can be classified under 'moral' headings.

Nature – whether it be a Force in itself, or merely the sum of age-long experience – has implanted deeply within all forms of life the instinct of self-preservation. Justly and wisely and necessarily so, since without it the species could not have survived.

On the lower planes of life, moral considerations do not arise. It is kill or be killed, eat or be eaten. Even, higher up the scale, a man confronted with a wild animal has only two choices: to run away, or to stay and give fight.

It is right and necessary that our nature contains some

aggression. As, however, we develop fuller self-consciousness, we must realize that this part of our nature exists, understand why it is there, and see that it does not run away with us.

So far as the physical expression of that natural aggression is concerned, there very soon comes a stage in the organization of human communities, when the individual expression of it must be curbed by social considerations.

Private killing is not allowed. Killing in self-defence is held justifiable, but even then can be declared so only when the circumstances have been most carefully examined. Social law begins to curb the expression of natural aggression. Society steps in, and takes upon itself the task of impartial and reasoned, instead of instinctive, punishment. That is, at least, the theory, even if the imperfect nature of ourselves and of our society sometimes has other results.

By extension of this process, we hope one day to reach a stage in which it would be as impossible for nations as for individuals to express their aggressive instincts in murder, but this is a subject which will be dealt with more fully later.

Thus it may be seen that the task of self-discipline, which is a basic necessity for all successful living, implies, not to try to eradicate in ourselves natural instincts which in any case are ineradicable if only because in certain forms they are good and necessary, but so to control and use those instincts that their fruit is helpful, not harmful, to our individual and social life.

Bearing these considerations in mind, let us try to define our terms.

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

There has probably been no other time in world history when success, in the sense of material gain, was so largely sought as it is to-day.

That is not to say that men have not always sought wealth and advancement, but in earlier ages there have usually

existed certain generally accepted standards of values which were not entirely based upon material things, and which were universally honoured even if 'more in the breach than in the observance'.

Eastern philosophy has of course always tended to place the accent upon the things of the spirit. On the whole, the worship of the kind of success we are now considering may be called the vice of the Western world.

It would seem that the practical results of these two different ways of looking at life are equally unhappy. The negative philosophy of certain Eastern races has led to the veneration of unproductive classes, both rich and poor, to a cult of 'acceptance' which has had the result that nothing is done to amend bad conditions, to the state of mind which tells a man rather to lie down and die – sure of a happy hereafter – than to make any effort in his own behalf.

The cult of materialism has shown itself in various forms – in the lust for power and desire of conquest, and, since the rise of the machine age, in the pursuit of wealth in money, with all the power which such wealth bestows.

Here, surely, it is plain that each of these ways of thought lacks balance. Only in a middle way between the two can we hope to find the true measure of success.

Far be it from me to decry the solid usefulness of some degree of material riches. Real poverty is a curse, stunting not only bodies, but also minds and souls. The true usefulness of a comfortable degree of wealth is twofold: the freedom it bestows in leisure and absence of worry, and the opportunity given by that freedom for self-development and social service.

On the other hand, the person who is born into a position of absolute security, in which no effort of any kind is ever asked of him, has from the beginning a handicap in the true development of his personality.

As surely as the baby's teeth need the rusk, and the boy's muscle needs exercise, just so surely does the total human

being need some degree of difficulty and in time responsibility.

This is not only necessary for immediate practical purposes. The development and hardening of teeth and muscle must serve daily practical needs; but it must do even more, ensuring equipment against emergency.

To change our illustration – the human being needs to develop physical strength, clear judgement and moral equilibrium, not only in order to carry out his daily tasks, at home and in work, but also to face the unforeseeable emergencies which may from time to time occur. The soft and pampered body will not be able to respond to such extra demand, nor will the soft and pampered mind. Neither will the soft and pampered judgement, when confronted with a moral dilemma such as comes to most of us sooner or later.

We should therefore endeavour to prepare ourselves in every sense not only for immediate practical needs, but for rather more.

What, then, should be our measure of success?

Surely it should lie, not in material position or possessions – since in the gain of these there is a large element of chance, and their achievement may well be tarnished with the sacrifice of the moral aspect of the human being – but rather in the degree to which the individual has met and used his circumstances and his gifts.

It is easy to be cynical, and to dismiss as platitudinous the statement that the rich are not on the whole to be envied. It is only too natural that those who are continually face to face with the problems of poverty should think that if only this difficulty could be solved, all else would follow.

My own personal experience, however, which has ranged through all sections of society and all kinds of men and women, does make me perfectly certain of one fact: that there is more real contentment to be found in the homes of the poor than in the homes of the rich.

I except, of course, from the term 'poor' the truly indigent, the parents and children sub-normal in body and mind whose horizon goes no further than the slums in which they are reared. In much the same way, we may except from the term 'rich' those, comfortably situated as compared to many others, whose lives in work and leisure are useful to society and balanced in themselves.

There are many spheres in which success may be sought: marriage, parenthood, business, citizenship – and, above all, within the individual himself. To take one of these parts of life out of its context and pursue it to the exclusion of the rest is to lose balance in the success of the whole life.

It is by no means uncommon to meet the successful business man who is envied and flattered by those around him, yet who knows no real inner peace or contentment because he has *failed* in the normal pursuits of life. Such men, often dynamos of misdirected energy, realize only too well what they have lost, and can buy forgetfulness only at the cost of continuing to drive themselves forward when real incentive no longer exists.

It is rare in comparison to find anyone outstandingly successful in marriage, parenthood, citizenship or personality who is a complete failure in all the other spheres of life – the reason being that success in human relationships depends upon all these factors, which are to a large extent interdependent.

The person who makes a success of marriage will do so because he has made a success of his personality – in the sense that he has learned self-understanding and control.

The person who makes a success of parenthood will do so as a result of the lessons learned in these former successes.

The person who is a success as a human being – in development of character – will be so in everything else, unless of course circumstances are bitterly against him.

We may therefore define success as continuing opportunity

to exercise one's natural gifts in a constructive way. In all spheres of life, this is a useful measure.

WHAT IS LIVING?

Here we touch philosophical questions which have exercised the mind of Man from the beginning of time.

Life is a curious gift, since so far as we know we did not ask for it. Being given, it brings in its train both joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain – above all, experience, which we can use or neglect to use.

We do not choose to come here. We have no voice in our physical, mental, moral, or material endowment. Yet even the lowliest of us shares what seems to be an innate feeling that our being here has significance beyond ourselves. Some of us are born handicapped in the material sense, others in physical or mental ways, others again perhaps even spiritually – if it is true that in some the primitive instincts are born more starkly than in others.

To live fully we need to use our bodies and minds fully and harmoniously against the background of reasonably good material conditions. Only in this way, I believe, can we attain spiritual content.

Yet this seems not quite enough, unless we know exactly what we mean by full and harmonious use of body and mind, for it brings us back again to Dr Joad's objection that such use may be directed to evil ends. Undoubtedly, the chief oppressors of mankind in history have made full use of their physical and mental powers – without, I am sure, reaching harmony either within themselves or in relation to those around them.

Therefore, *to live*, in the fullest sense, must imply not merely to exist to oneself, but to be in harmony with that humanity of which we are a part.

Yet can one be in harmony with that which in itself is inharmonious?

The history of mankind is a patchwork of such cruelty and kindness, meanness and nobility, selfishness and self-sacrifice, that any balance it may have appears to be only a balance between good and evil. If that is what we should seek in ourselves, we have not only to offset our evil impulses by striving after good, but also to temper our good actions by a knowledge of evil.

Nor does this seem to me unreasonable. Indeed, it is rather the logical outcome of that need to understand our instinctive nature and then to control it, which we have discussed a little way back.

Those who live good narrow lives, without knowledge of the evils abroad in the world, are ultimately as barren as those who seek evil ends and reject social claims.

If we are really to live, it must be with understanding of all human motives. We must know shadow as well as sunshine, pain as well as pleasure, sorrow as well as joy – and if we have felt the prompting of primitive instinct in its undesirable forms, we can more readily understand the need for control of ourselves and forgiveness for others.

Having seen or experienced cruelty, we may learn kindness.

Having suffered meanness, we realize the possibility of nobility.

Finding in ourselves and others deep impulses of selfishness, we appreciate more fully that unselfishness in the alternative.

Life, like a two-sided shield, shows us its one face in order that we may know the other exists, and may seek it. That is truly living.

No man consciously and wilfully seeks the ruin of his physical body by knowingly causing himself ill-health. He may succumb to desires which undermine his constitution, but that is not the end he seeks.

No man consciously and wilfully seeks the ruin of his spiritual being by knowingly doing evil. He may succumb to

desires which bring about that result, but only by assuring himself that what he seeks is good or necessary.

Therefore, fundamentally, all human beings know – though they may reject the knowledge – that physical and spiritual health is their goal.

Physical and spiritual health together constitute *living*.

WHAT IS SUCCESSFUL LIVING?

Successful Living, then, if we go by our two home-made definitions, will mean the continuing exercise of our natural gifts in a constructive way in a condition of physical and spiritual health. That this is what each of us is seeking, perhaps only unconsciously, is seen if you imagine yourself in such a condition.

If you had reached success in living to such a degree, plainly the assessment of *who*, *what* and *where* you were would show complete harmony and balance, both within themselves and in their relationship to each other.

The exercise of our natural gifts must be continuing, or we stop short and become stale and repetitive.

Their use must be constructive, positive, in a sense a 'giving' of ourselves beyond exact calculation of reward; that is, its results must be of value to others beyond our limited self – or we become separate and sterile.

Yet such use of our gifts is interdependent with our physical and spiritual health.

The sum of these things is the achievement of harmony, and therefore of content.

Can any one of us claim that our personal balance-sheet shows so happy a state of affairs? I do not think so.

Nor is it the case, I must emphasize once again, that discontents are caused only by true grievances, such as enforced poverty and lack of opportunity. On the contrary, experience shows that it is most frequently those who are well situated compared with many others who are most unsettled in them-

selves – whereas many a family living in overcrowded conditions on a small income manages to achieve a high degree of normal happiness. It would seem therefore that in most instances the causes of our discontents are in ourselves. Certainly, the causes of the many personal tragedies of to-day are mostly in the people concerned.

It is true that at the present time more than ever in the past, we may find outside things weighing heavily upon us – world shortages of goods and food, warfare, political and racial persecution. These things have always existed, and in past ages there were added to them the scourge of plague and epidemic on a scale which modern knowledge has almost completely brought to an end.

In the immensity of present civilization, and the close impact of nations upon one another, the individual to-day often finds his whole life disrupted by forces quite beyond his control. But to seek to cure the sickness of mankind by regulating the conduct of world affairs is in my view to begin at the wrong end.

The ardent young people who support this or that revolutionary creed with the selfless purpose of bringing order and justice to a distracted world are by the very force of fact and circumstance compelled to persecute in their turn in order to obtain those ends. They find themselves forced to distort their own conscience and purity of action, while, in those on whom they impose their will, suffering starts once more the vicious circle of distortion and desire for revenge.

To start at the other end – seeking the completion of the individual – is a far surer, if slower, means to obtain not only individual peace and contentment, but peace and contentment within nations and between nations throughout the world.

For Successful Living, if it means anything at all, cannot imply a separate shut-in wellbeing of the individual alone. Indeed, such separate wellbeing is quite impossible, and is even a contradiction in terms, since the needs of our three-

fold nature make us interdependent with others in the physical, mental and spiritual aspects.

None of us can exist only to ourselves. The circles of our influence grow wider and ever wider, through family and small community, to nation and world community – just as we receive from those others the stronger or weaker influences cast out by them.

It is not selfish or small to seek individual harmony, so long as we realize that our purpose is twofold: to perfect ourselves from within, and to make our contribution to the greater harmony needed in the world at large.

There have been many saints who have cut themselves off from the world and sought inner peace. It may well be that their prayers for mankind have helped us, since we cannot know what psychic force may lie in the concentration of goodwill. There have been many sinners who have cut themselves off from humanity by seeking selfish ends. Sometimes incidental good has arisen from their activities, but on the whole their ill will has only increased confusion.

Perhaps we can learn from these two extreme examples to make a synthesis: to search after individual harmony and to give that gift when gained as a positive contribution to the wellbeing of the human community of which we are a part.

If Man is Body only, then successful living will mean only the health and activity of that body, with no care for others.

If Man is Body and Mind only, then successful living will imply the wellbeing and harmonious working of that body and mind, with no care for others of like condition.

If Man is Body, Mind and Spirit only, then successful living will demand no more of us than to keep our individual body, mind and spirit in a state of health.

YET MAN IS MORE – for he is Body, Mind and Spirit not separate but contained within the greater Body, Mind and Spirit of his whole race, not merely those living now, but all who have lived and all yet to come.

So for successful life we must reach out for harmony not

only *in* our individual Body, Mind and Spirit; and *between* our own Body, Mind and Spirit; but also *between* these *and* the Bodies, Mind and Spirits of all human beings, living, dead and yet to be born.

The great need of individuals and of communities to-day is the sense of Purpose. It is that need which gives rise to religious and political creeds, all of them founded in the best intentions, all of them doomed to perpetuate the cruelties and injustices of the past in new forms only because of the lack of understanding of the organic nature of life – in the spirit as in mind and body.

Let us once realize the Unity of Life, the interdependence of all units of Life, and we can make our search for Successful Living not a mere selfish yearning after personal happiness but a constructive offering towards the harmony of all humanity.

But we must begin at the beginning.

Our ultimate purpose, never to be lost sight of, may yet obscure our vision of the immediate task and cause us to do nothing but pass time in vague dreams, unless we have a practical starting-point.

Let us, then, remember:

There will never be peace in the world until there is quiet in the individual spirit.

There will never be justice in the world until there is equity in the individual mind.

There will never be charity or compassion in the world until the individual heart is flooded with understanding of itself and of others.

Therefore each of us must begin our search for these things within himself.

Only then shall we really come to understand Donne's words: *Send not to know for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee.*

Chapter 3

*

YOUR THREE-FOLD NATURE

It is now generally conceded that in many respects character, and even mental activity, are to a great extent dependent upon physical wellbeing. Conversely, of course, mental and psychological disturbance can affect physical health.

If there is anything out of order in the tissues of the brain or nervous system, or in the glandular system – which is so closely allied to them – mental abnormality is likely to follow. Just as surely, if less directly, the mind and character of the mentally 'normal' person will suffer if his body is not in good working order. Similarly, worry or chronic depression may have a depressive effect upon physical health.

It is not yet clearly understood what is the 'bridge' or uniting factor between body and mind. There are indications that it may lie in glandular activity. Experiment has shown that changes in glandular activity can alter the quality of the mind and the cast of character. Mental shock or fear, or other strong emotion, can also cause the glands to be disturbed in a manner causing changes of mentality.

Cretinous children, given appropriate gland treatment, may be so improved in condition that they can take a place in society. Habitual criminal tendencies may yield to a new technique of brain surgery. These are extreme cases, with which it is not the intention to deal here, but they do serve to illustrate the interdependence of body and mind.

The interdependence of body and mind has great importance for us all, both from the philosophical and from the practical point of view. If we are to know inner spiritual harmony, we must first determine the relative importance of

body and mind in human life on this earth. For upon our attitude towards this depend also mental and physical harmony.

BODY, MIND OR SPIRIT?

Men have always been profoundly interested in the relative importance of the human race in relation to Creation as a whole. Similarly, they have from the earliest times debated the claims of body and mind, usually insisting that one or other must be 'superior'.

There have been, and still are, men who claim that the body is supreme. They may express this claim in words, or they may show implicitly that they believe it – whatever lip-service they may pay to mind and spirit – by living as if, in fact, the body and life in the body were all we have, or can ever hope for.

There have been, and are, others, who claim for mental and spiritual activity the highest place, regarding the body as something less important, and even sometimes as undesirable – a necessary evil. This attitude is more widespread among thinking people, because it has become part and parcel of the popular philosophies of both the Eastern and the Western world.

When we want to know what a person's true views are, apart from what he preaches, and may sincerely believe to be his own opinions, the surest test is to argue back from what he *does*. On that basis, we find that many people who talk about unselfishness, good citizenship, and so on, do in fact in the deepest recesses of their souls believe only in materialism.

It is natural enough that we should all give a high place to physical needs and material wellbeing, for that is the basis of our life on earth. Yet few of us can be quite content with this, for centuries of teaching have persuaded us that to do *only* this is not quite enough. There is also, of course, in all of us, a furtive feeling that there may be other worlds of which we

know nothing – and which it may be just as well to placate by occasionally remembering them.

This unresolved conflict between the claims of body, mind and spirit produces many unfortunate results.

Where the body, and the material things necessary to it, are the only god, the result must almost certainly be a primitive selfishness which injures others and prevents the full development of the individual.

Where the mind alone is worshipped, intelligence may be developed to a high degree, at the cost of body and of character, breeding the weakly, 'ineffectual don'.

Where the spirit is regarded as the only end, the result is likely to be detrimental to both body and mind. Not only is one's own body neglected, but also the bodies of others, so that while the eyes are fixed on heaven, the business of earth goes all awry. The mind is likely also to cease enquiry, being exercised only in one narrow groove.

Where no clear-cut distinction is made between the claims of body, mind and spirit, nor any real harmony between them gained by thought or training, it is likely that indulgence will be given to the body, but with a sneaking feeling that to do so is 'wrong'. This is the position of the majority of people.

Such a clash of instinctive and acquired motives, causing tension in the mind of the individual, may well mean in fact that natural impulses, instead of being recognized and consciously *controlled*, become *repressed*. The result may then well be that through repression they gather added force, sometimes expressing themselves in undesirable and even perverted forms. As we shall see later, this is especially true in the sphere of sexual life.

It seems that to make a strict distinction between body, mind and spirit is an error from all points of view. It is erroneous from the standpoint of science. Each further step of our knowledge shows more conclusively how closely body and mind are bound up together. It is erroneous also from

the standpoint of philosophy. So far as we know, there could be no *working* of the spirit without the body.

Mind and body, and the spirit which hovers between them, are necessary to existence from both the scientific and the philosophic points of view. To develop one at the expense of the other is to violate the principle of harmony which rules throughout Creation. Therefore the first step of the man or woman seeking inner harmony must be to make sure that both body and mind are in good order, and kept in good order by exercise, and to give neither supremacy. From the balance reached will come full harmony – of body, mind *and* spirit.

HAVE YOU INNER HARMONY?

To sum up:

The man who indulges and pampers his body, neglecting to exercise his intelligence and refusing to recognize the needs of his spirit, is crippling himself – and incidentally courting the destruction of the body to which he is enslaved.

The man who develops intelligence while neglecting his body, and refusing to recognize the needs of his spirit, also cripples himself – and incidentally undermines the physical wellbeing of the seat of intelligence.

The man who tries to devote himself entirely to the things of the spirit, restricting intellectual exercise to a narrow field and ignoring the body, equally cripples himself – and in his neglect of the physical needs of others risks spiritual destruction too.

Much of the world's miseries can be traced to men's sincere but *one-sided* seekings after Truth.

As we have already noted, whatever is forced down within us – repressed, that is, instead of controlled – will find a way of rising again, and in seeking that way may well assume some unnatural form. The repressed spirit will torment the man who places too great a stress on either physical or intellectual life, with discontents which he cannot understand. The

repressed intellect will find ways to exercise itself in spite of its owner, perhaps through cunning and scheming. The repressed physical nature will revenge itself in any of a hundred ways.

These three 'ways of division' are 'ways of destruction', too. In the mass they have tended to produce intolerance, persecution and wars of conquest. In the individual, their tendency is towards brutality, prejudice and perversion. Few of the evils abroad in the world to-day cannot be ultimately traced to the failure of individuals and of nations to find a just balance between the claims and needs of their three-fold nature.

To have been born with the normal physical and mental equipment – which, working harmoniously together, give the possibility of spiritual fulfilment – is a tremendous blessing. The great majority of people go through life without appreciating this. Even when we are made to realize it, by coming face to face with others not so blessed, we are liable to forget only too soon.

To have inherited such gifts, and then to ruin them through ignorance or inattention, is to be guilty of a folly which must react upon ourselves – and upon other people too. If we are sound in body and mind we should recognize and be grateful for that fact – whatever else we may have at the moment to grumble about – and make it one of the foundation-stones of our successful living.

THE PRACTICAL BASES OF INNER HARMONY

Perhaps you feel that you already appreciate the reality of your triple nature. You may have arrived at similar conclusions from your own thinking, or have had wise and understanding parents and teachers who helped you to base your life upon these beliefs.

Have you, however, given them really thorough practical application?

Few of us live up to our own best ideals. We all know things about ourselves which we should not like to hear proclaimed abroad, or even whispered among those who know us.

There is no need to be discouraged if, on reflexion, you have to confess that so far you have not lived your life in such a way as to meet all the claims of the three sides of your human nature. If you can honestly say that you have even tried, that is a very good beginning – far more than many people ever reach.

Perhaps you have never thought about the matter at all. You may have lived unreflectively, 'muddling through', meeting each physical, mental or spiritual problem as it came. You have probably found that it took a good deal of time and energy – time and energy which, because they were not applied systematically, were very largely wasted. Why not consider now the possibility that it is this neglect to think out these problems from their bases which has caused you somehow to lose your way in life?

It should be pointed out, however, before we go further, that nothing said here should be taken as meaning that we should neglect our special gifts in striving vainly to improve ourselves where we are not gifted. The man who chooses a way of life demanding a fine and well-trained physique may have in some degree to neglect the cultivation of his mind – from the reality point of view. The man who has a studious bent may find himself to some extent forced to neglect the thorough exercise of his body. It would obviously be absurd for, say, someone intended to be a doctor to try to be in equal degree a mathematician. In many cases, a certain degree of specialization will be the only practical solution.

That does not, however, alter the fact that the athlete will be the better human being if he exercises his mind, or the student more completely a man if he exercises his body. Nor can either afford to neglect his spiritual life. No-one, however poor in body or mind, need be poor in spiritual wealth.

It is, however, time it should be recognized that excellence of

body is just as essential to a community as excellence of mind. It is mere snobbishness to extol one at the expense of the other, as is generally the case to-day. Indeed, from the purely practical point of view, the community has need of both kinds of excellence, as surely as Nature through the division of labour has shown a need for different qualities for the performance of different duties.

With this reservation in mind, let us try, very simply, to consider just what 'balance between body and mind, leading to spiritual harmony', should imply. If we take the plainest and most common examples, perhaps we shall be able to see and recognize in our own lives instances where that balance has been lacking, and the lack of harmony to which it has given rise.

We will work backwards, as it were, from some of the personal problems which affect many of us, and if the general theory is correct, we may be able to see how those problems have come about through lack of understanding of the three-fold nature of life.

The most practical way would seem to be to ask ourselves questions relating to each of the three planes on which we live. These will not be the *only* possible questions, or even perhaps the *best* question. They are intended to be used as sign-posts to some of the different *kinds* of error to which human nature, badly trained, is most prone.

The first three questions will relate to the body, the second three to the mind and the last three to the spirit. Of course, they will overlap into the other planes as well, since it is simply not possible for human beings in this world to exist only as body, mind and spirit.

We are a fusion of the three. The more certainly we, as individuals, realize that, and try to live accordingly, the nearer we shall be to really successful living.

Chapter 4

*

ARE YOU 'IN HARMONY' WITH YOUR BODY?

WHAT we are seeking now to discover is whether or not you have reached a balance between the three sides of your nature as a human being. Before we can do so, however, we must examine each of those 'sides' separately, for it may well be that your own attitude to one or more of them is throwing out of alignment in one direction or another your whole balance as an individual.

The three questions relating to the body will need to bear upon the simple practical basis of earthly life – upon the fact that we have a body; the fact that it requires, like any other machine, to be kept in good working order; and the fact that reproduction of our kind is essential to the continuance of the human race.

The first question is:

HAVE YOU A STRONG SENSE OF SHAME OF NAKEDNESS?

Our bodies are all made in much the same way, and they exist among millions of other such bodies, of similar appearance and functions. It is therefore a rather strange thing that the mere fact of having a body at all should *in itself* be a problem for some people – indeed, for many people.

Such people often do not themselves realize what is the matter with them, or indeed that anything is the matter at all. Yet they go through life suffering needless embarrassments, causing them to other people, and only too often implanting

in young minds similar ideas, giving rise to a new set of problems in the next generation.

Those who give the question any real thought – or those who, having a realistic upbringing do not need to – have usually a fairly commonsense attitude at any rate by the time they reach adult years. Yet it is amazing how many retain throughout life a very strong sense of guilt and shame, as if to possess a body were somehow wrong and unclean.

Those who suffer from exaggerated embarrassment in this direction are usually those who have not allowed themselves to think the matter out, but who have *suppressed* it from any place in their conscious minds. They put themselves through agonies of unnecessary shame, and, as we have already noted, what is far worse, they often leave with children or young persons an impression that there is something sordid in our physical nature. They are, of course, in this instance, passing on an injury which was most probably done to themselves in their own child or infant life.

The new-born child is aware of his own physical requirements, the need for food, and the equally pressing need to get rid of waste material. He is aware also, not of course on an intellectual, but rather upon an emotional, level, that for the satisfaction of these needs he depends upon his parents, and especially upon his mother. As he grows up, and finds that his parents cover, and even hide, their bodies (in, for example, bathing and undressing), he is impressed with the idea that there is something mysterious and perhaps even shameful. Then it is that the roots are embedded for faulty attitudes towards the body in later life. Any number of trivial incidents, which are not however trivial to the child, may tend during childhood to emphasize this original impression.

Such an attitude is likely to centre chiefly upon the excretory functions, and, very naturally, to be transferred to the reproductive functions as time goes on.

ARE YOU DEEPLY EMBARRASSED BY THE NECESSITY TO ACKNOWLEDGE PHYSICAL NEEDS IN SOCIAL LIFE?

So it comes about that many people cannot bring themselves to acknowledge the existence of the body's essential functions, except in so far as they are inescapable in daily life – and then only with excessive embarrassment.

Now, to a very great degree, such embarrassment in some circumstances cannot be avoided. From the social point of view, indeed, it is desirable that the body's more intimate functions should be *private.* It seems, also, that where an activity is habitually practised in private, there follows a tendency – arising from that secrecy – to regard it with shame. If eating were as private a matter as other physical functions, we should no doubt be very shocked if someone discovered us engaged in it.

This does not, however, by any means account for the *excessive* shame or guilt which in many people's minds attach to physical functions. It seems much more likely that the *moral* implications given to these matters by unthinking parents when training their infants in cleanliness and their adolescents in continence cause the sense of guilt and shame to become irrevocably bound up in the growing mind with physical functions.

The small child accepts his natural functions, takes an interest in them, and is often proud of his success in them – unless or until a false shame is implanted in his mind through thoughtless correction by an adult. The use of the words 'wrong' and 'dirty' by parents may leave in a child's mind a far more serious impression than they intend. The child cannot make the distinction between the civilized behaviour demanded of him, and his impulse to carry out natural functions when and where the need is felt. Thoughtless and over-emphatic correction may lead him to feel that there is something inherently 'wrong' and 'dirty', not in the time and

place he has chosen, but in the fact of his having such necessities at all. When he has already been deeply impressed with the mysteriousness of the body, and especially of its private parts, he may well carry over this strong impression into adult life.

Some adolescents, suddenly faced with the fact of sexuality, for which they are mentally unprepared, and correlating it (through the nearness together of the excretory and sexual organs) with what they have already been led to believe is 'dirty', experience a sudden revulsion against all physical needs. Some even go through a period when eating itself seems disgusting, because it is an animal function. Indeed, it is supposed to have become quite a widespread notion, among the 'nicer' young ladies of a few generations back, that if they wished to gain and preserve a reputation for 'spirituality' they should never be seen indulging in so gross a pleasure as a good meal. Perhaps it is not without significance that, at the same period, they were expected to meet any emotional disturbance by fainting, and any disappointment in love by 'going into a decline'.

To-day, all this seems to most of us patently absurd. Yet it is surely just as foolish to feel shame in the natural shape of the body; of the necessity to rid it of waste material and thus keep it in good working order; or of its response to those sexual urges which are a natural hunger whose dual purpose is to cause us to seek completion with a member of the other sex, and so to procreate children to carry on our kind.

If we are sound in mind and body, we should recognize the fact and be grateful for it, refusing to permit our outlook to be warped by mistaken training. Our aim should be to keep our bodies *beautiful* in their natural form, *healthy* in their natural functions, and *useful* to ourselves, to the community, and to the whole race of which we are a part.

How can there be anything disagreeable or unpleasant in, for example, the functions of the digestive system – which include eating and the ridding of the body of waste matter

through urination and defaecation? Rather it is a daily miracle, for if there is one basic quality which lifts sentient life above insentient matter, it is this capacity for renewal which enables it to be both flexible and sensitive, and yet to so very great a degree enduring.

How can there be anything disagreeable or unpleasant in the reproductive functions, so pleasurable, healthful, and useful?

Those who can trace in their own attitude the results of tactless training should give a little quiet thought to persuade themselves to adopt a more free and human point of view. They will do a great service to the community as a whole if they will also resolve to do nothing to pass on to another generation ideas so positively harmful. Parents who have themselves suffered in this way, and by their own effort have reached a balanced outlook, will be the more likely to see that their own children are brought up in a realistic manner which will prevent their lives being complicated by unnecessary inner struggles.

HAVE YOU ANY FEAR OR SHAME REGARDING MARRIAGE INTIMACIES?

We have already noted that an unrealistic attitude towards the body, especially to the excretory functions, tends to become centred upon the reproductive system as the child approaches adult years. Only too often, indeed, this essential and healthy part of human life is the focus of unbalance in the human soul.

Yet, plainly, the flexible and sensitive human body has two essential needs. It must – if it is to be capable of development – be able to replace worn tissues and to have the power of growth. That is the basis of the digestive process, with all it implies. It must also be able to reproduce itself in a new form – very similar, but always slightly different. That is the basis of the reproductive system, with all it implies.

If human beings were like cars, each 'new model' would

have to be re-designed and re-created. There would be little hope of change and development except by such stupendous new and separate acts of creation. Death is necessary to Life in order to clear the way for the future. Reproduction is necessary in order to ensure that each new life may be yet one more experiment.

Without sexuality, reproduction might mean no more than repetition of the creature which had gone before. We may assume that sexual reproduction exists as the means by which each new birth shall be the result of a new blending of different lines of heredity, and therefore produce different characteristics.

It is necessary to the life of the race in order that there shall be continual replacement of the units of life. It is also necessary to the life of the individual, because Nature – in order to fulfil her purpose of ensuring such replacement – has implanted in each of us most strongly the impulse and the need for sexual fulfilment.

So strongly, indeed, has Nature done this, and so determined is she that her purpose shall not be thwarted, that our sexuality is most intimately bound up with physical, mental and spiritual organs and functions. Where body, mind or spirit are deranged or depraved, the force and method of sexual impulse will vary. Where sexuality is impaired for physical or psychological reasons, body, mind and spirit are all likely to be affected.

That is why it is of supreme importance that no child should be condemned to reach adult years with any sort of abnormal or unhealthy attitude towards sexuality. Not only his own health and happiness, but those of other people (especially of members of the opposite sex) will certainly be involved.

Many a so-called 'monster', hounded in the public courts and in the public press, is largely the product of the offences which may have been done, lightly and unwittingly, against him, developing in him a positive warping where it was most

essential that he should grow straight and normal. Many an unhappy marriage, or wasted spinsterhood, owes its bitterness to similar origins.

COMMONSENSE AND THE BODY

To sum up:

The body in itself, in the fact of its existence, need constitute no problem while it is healthy, and while our attitude towards it is healthy too. If, however, we are aware of it to that degree that it is a problem in our lives – disease apart – the question is in basis a social one.

We may in early childhood have absorbed the idea that excretory or sexual functions were shameful in themselves – whereas the truth is that they are *private*, and should be exercised at the correct time and place. We may have come through wrong teaching, or childish or youthful misunderstanding of good teaching, to believe that our physical impulses are *wrong*. Except where deep derangement leads to criminal impulses, or where emotional drives cause physical expression harmful to others, our physical impulses cannot be a *moral* question at all.

We have impulses to eat and drink, to urinate and defaecate. If we observe social convention in doing so, and if we do not overload through greed or shame the natural apparatus which exists for the purpose, there can be nothing wrong in this.

We have impulses to reproduce our kind, and to fulfil our own natures, through an act of union with a person of the opposite sex. Here the reservations in our freedom to do so are more complicated. The satisfaction of these impulses involves other human beings with lives, feelings and minds of their own, and with their own rights not to be injured by what we may selfishly desire. There are strong reasons for careful control in the sexual field, since here we can so easily injure other people and cause widespread harm.

What we need to recognize first, therefore, in gaining inner harmony, is that the body – the right and necessary instru-

ment of mind and spirit – cannot in itself be either shameful or immoral. Shame and immorality – and what we generally mean by 'dirtiness' – can arise only when we use that body in ways or under circumstances which are socially undesirable and harmful to others.

'Harmful' in this instance means much more than only causing plain and manifest injury. It seems wise and far-seeing in Catholic teachers to cite, as one of the reasons for abstaining from evil-doing, that it gives bad example and is scandalous to others. It is often great fun to scandalize the 'bourgeois'. On the other hand, to outrage anyone's sincere convictions is to cause them positive pain without gaining any desirable end – for it is not in such a way that they will be converted to a wider outlook.

Provided, therefore, that we understand that in the exercise of the physical functions – as in fact in all living – we should keep within the bounds of social restraint, which is ultimately for our own protection, there would seem to be no reason why we should allow ourselves any longer to be hampered by an unbalanced concept of the nature and importance of the body.

There can be nothing unwholesome in the functions of the healthy body. If unwholesomeness exists in any instance, it is surely our own fault – either because we wrong others by forgetting the duty we owe them, or because we wrong ourselves by forgetting our duty to ourselves.

It may be well to point out here that those who *over-emphasize* the body's importance are in equal error with those who wish to deny it any importance at all. In making it their god, they deny the claims of their own mental and spiritual natures, and equally, though with different emphasis, lack balance and become cut off from complete inner harmony.

A balanced attitude, an adult understanding, can best be reached by realizing the *rightness* of the body as a necessary basis of human life – but still as only one basis, of the three needed to complete the true Man or Woman.

Chapter 5

*

ARE YOU 'IN HARMONY' WITH YOUR MIND?

ONE of the most disturbing tendencies of modern times has been the increasing respect paid to intellectuality *as such*, regardless of the uses to which it may be put, and often to the detriment of those other qualities, both physical and spiritual, which go to make up the complete human being. It is, perhaps, an inevitable result of the wider spread of education and its increasing direction into utilitarian rather than scholarly ends. Intellectual gifts have become a kind of 'capital', through which wealth and power may be gained, just as, in earlier times, it was through the strong arm that men sought these rewards.

The decline of religious faith, and the growth of general scepticism, have accentuated this trend, leading, as Shelley himself foresaw when he wrote of his own 'mad pride of intellectuality', to too great a dependence upon mankind's very limited power of reason.

The results have been various. True scholarship has not been advanced. Many young brains have been forced beyond their capacity by the need to win scholarships and entry into the professions; and their use is frequently directed into the wrong channels. Worse, however, many young people have grown up to put so great a weight upon the value of intellectual gifts that they can no longer see or judge the human creature as a whole.

'Intellectual snobbishness' is not by any means confined to the person who is himself greatly gifted. On the contrary, those who in early years have been made to feel their own comparative deficiency in this respect have often a rather

A176

touching reverence for the capacity they do not share, which is likely to mislead them in making any estimate of the intellectual's total worth.

Superiority in any one of the three spheres of human life is not enough to communicate to the individual a superior value. It is as *total personalities* that we should be judged. Yet so great is the respect paid to-day to the 'expert' and the 'specialist', that we are likely to be blinded by excellence in one capacity from making any accurate assessment of the human being in all his aspects taken together.

What we *admire*, to such a degree and so *positively* as to bring creative imagination into play, we tend to *be*. On the other hand, what we *admire* to as great a degree, but *negatively* (with an inner assumption of our own everlasting inferiority) we tend *not to be*, giving up the struggle before it is begun. So it comes about that any early conviction of our own inferiority in one sphere of life is likely to inhibit us from gaining the desired capacity; unless our reaction is so positive and aggressive that it acts as a spur.

It is therefore very desirable, if we desire truly to know and understand ourselves, that we should first of all discover whether we have any bias towards admiration of a certain class of qualities; and secondly ask ourselves whether such excessive accent upon that class of qualities has been in any sense a hindrance to our development as total human beings.

That is not to say that we should not have a healthy sense of achievement, where we have applied our natural gifts to good use and cultivated them by our own hard work.

For example, the child who has been made to feel unloved may unconsciously determine to command admiration to fill up the emotional gulf. It is likely that in after-years the man who was that child, endeavouring to reach self-understanding, will have to confess to himself that his excessive concentration in his particular sphere has brought both positive rewards, in success, and positive losses, perhaps in lack of human relationships.

In such a case, he is entitled to be proud of the achievement which is his; nor, unless he is very old, need it be too late for him to redress the balance. Realization of the origin of his excessive concentration may enable him to tackle his work more easily, with less strained attention, and to develop his undeveloped possibilities. The end result is then likely to be a more loving, more loved, and therefore more fully human and more completely contented being.

In case this may seem too ideal, let it be said once more that none of us is likely to achieve perfection, with perfect balance, in this earthly life. We shall, however, lose nothing, and may gain much, in the attempt. Let us, therefore, in order to find whether or not our tendency is to place too great an accent upon the sphere of intellect, put to ourselves three simple questions.

HAVE YOU A STRONG FEELING THAT YOU ARE THE INTELLECTUAL INFERIOR (OR SUPERIOR) OF MOST PEOPLE YOU KNOW?

In the first place, it would be well for us to bear in mind that the scope of human mentality is not so wide as many of us might wish to believe. The gulf between genius and idiot – to take the extremes – is not so great as might appear at first sight. There is no reason to believe that a far wider range of intellectuality might not be possible – with some finer instrument than our human brain, complicated and wonderful as it is. To realize this need be no cause for despondency. It leaves all the greater opportunity for further development in the future. There seems to be no reason why evolution should come to a standstill with ourselves.

Human mentality probably depends, in the last analysis, upon the healthy functioning of a gland smaller than a pea. Although very much of what we are and what we can become does depend upon our own will, if we care to exercise it, it is

not within our power to vary the basic quality of mental 'brightness' with which we are endowed.

Need this be a cause for distress?

Not necessarily so. Those fortunate in this respect have been given a very useful instrument, which may be valuable for three positive ends. Through its use, they can make their way in life, they can be of service to the society in which they live, and they can pursue cultural interests which will enrich their lives and personalities. Yet no initial merit belongs to them personally for something received from beyond themselves, which should cause them to be grateful and humble rather than arrogant.

Those less fortunate should not, on the other hand, feel that if no effort of theirs can increase the quality of their mental equipment, an incentive has been taken away from them. They have, as we shall see in a moment, their own compensations.

We do not develop at the same rate, either intellectually or physically. Some show great promise at an early age, but do not fulfil it; others get off to a slow start but make great progress at a later stage. Unfortunately, this fact is not always sufficiently realized, either by parents or teachers, or, not unnaturally, by the children themselves. Thus it comes about that children are often harmfully affected by being led to believe either that they are exceptionally brilliant, or that they are unusually dull.

Sharpness and dullness of brain – and the inner conviction of sharpness or dullness, whether or not supported by the facts – can both be dangerous to their possessors, tempting them, or sometimes indeed even seeming to force them, into loss of balance between the various activities which make up their total human lives.

The clever child, encouraged by injudicious praise, and perhaps spurred by some deep emotional hunger, may tend to develop brain at the expense of the body. Not only may his physical health suffer, but his character too, if he comes to

regard himself as superior to others and distinct from them. The child who, by comparison, is backward, may become strongly impressed with the notion that he is inadequate and inferior – a feeling naturally so strong in us all that it requires little to bring it to the surface. The likely result is that he will retreat yet further into his 'backwardness', refusing to make the best use of such powers as he has. The feeling of inferiority, now over-developed, may set up far-reaching effects in later life.

It would be difficult to say which of two such children has the worst start.

The young person who enters the adult world convinced that he is a shining light and unable to see in true proportion his place in society will have very great difficulty in settling down to make a useful life among other people. Young people with outstanding scholastic records do not always prove successful in working life – because to work among others requires much more than intellectual aptitude. On the other hand, when such a person works alone, driven by the knowledge that he cannot get on with other people, then in the seclusion of the study he is likely to become still further detached from the main stream of humanity.

The 'backward' child's reaction to the conviction of his 'inferiority' may be expressed in any of a number of ways. He may become introspective and submissive, or, through an aggressive reaction, develop a grudge against life and against society. In extreme cases, this may end in actual delinquency – as also, of course, may the extremes of intellectual self-admiration.

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT HIGH INTELLECTUAL ATTAINMENT EXCUSES GROSS FAULTS OF CHARACTER?

Perhaps it is the competitive system in schools which is to blame, or perhaps we still tend, like our animal forbears, to

delight in purring – but there is a common tendency to excuse faults of character and actions harmful to others, where someone is regarded as unusually 'clever'.

The temptation of the 'intellectual', as such, is to cut himself off from the generality of human affairs and human experience. This is a blasphemy against the oneness of life, which is usually paid for by loneliness. Consciousness of that loneliness, and the failure it implies, may result in an urge to gain a kind of satisfaction of revenge, in outraging yet further the implicit rules of social life. Such a case is extreme, but it is not without interest, for our tendency to condone error in those whose achievements we admire means that there is in fact no effective brake upon them, either from within or from without.

If we suspect the existence of such anti-social tendencies in ourselves, we should endeavour to disdain those cheap triumphs which might be gained by the exercise of superior cunning, at the expense of our own better nature. In his 'Republic', Plato demonstrates by the Socratic method that any material gain obtained at the expense of personal integrity is in fact a loss, each such occasion continuing more surely the corruption of the spirit. This is most true, and the fact that we know instinctively that it is so, is proved by the very energy with which we 'pat ourselves on the back' when we have gained a private end by not telling the whole truth, or by doing not quite the right thing. Our self-praise is needed to drown the still small voice which tries hard to insist that there are values beyond the purely physical and mental.

Once more let us emphasize that we have all a right to be proud of our achievements, in the intellectual as in any other sphere. If, however, they have been gained at too great an expense to either body or spirit, they may be too dearly won. Those who live for themselves alone – whether through intellectual pride or through its opposite, the desire to make up for a feeling of intellectual inferiority – deny the first principle

of Life. They must not, then, expect society or Life itself to be merciful to them.

DO YOU FEEL THAT REASON AND LOGIC ARE THE ONLY TRUE GUIDES TO CONDUCT?

Perhaps the greatest temptation of the 'intellectual' is to exalt reason above all other standards. This is peculiarly tempting to people of a certain temperament, those who fear or distrust the physical or spiritual urges with which they have not yet come to terms. As with all extremes, this is a path to misery for others and oneself.

It is certainly desirable – most desirable – that we should all develop our reasoning powers to the fullest degree possible, so long as in so doing we do not neglect to develop our other capacities. If, in addition, we would try to apply reason in daily life, especially in our judgement and understanding of ourselves and our motives, much of the human muddle and misery which now exists might be prevented.

But reason itself, unrelated to physical and spiritual needs both in oneself and in others, is not merely a barren but a misleading thing.

It is, for example, very easy to *reason* that through our own peculiar excellence we should have what belongs to someone else. Such reason, however, even where it might be objectively reasonable, still ignores the physical and spiritual needs and rights of others – to say nothing of our own spiritual needs, which in wronging others we deny.

There is a classic example of this in Dostoievsky's great novel, *Crime and Punishment*. Indeed, it may well be that the book itself has its origin in the writer's meditation of these problems.

The crime for which such punishment in mental suffering to himself and all who love him is exacted, is committed by the penniless student Raskolnikov. He needs money in order

to continue his studies. His victim is a degraded old woman, a miser, vicious in her life.

Though the true motive of his crime is buried deep in Raskolnikov's unconscious mind, this is the kind of reasoning by which he convinces himself of the *rightness* of his intended deed:

> On the one hand, young, fresh strength droops and is lost for want of sustenance . . . a thousand good deeds and enterprises could be carried out and upheld with the money this old woman has bequeathed to a monastery. . . . Kill her, I say, take it from her and dedicate it to the service of humanity and the general good! . . . What in proportion is the life of this miserable old woman? No more than the life of a flea, a beetle, nay, not even that, for she is pernicious.

Having argued so strong a case, Dostoievsky redresses the balance by creating the character of the uneducated, fallen girl Sonia, who instinctively understands the nature of the human being rich beyond mere intellectuality. Her words to Raskolnikov are:

> Go forthwith, go this very moment to the nearest public place, prostrate yourself, kiss the earth you have stained . . . and proclaim . . . 'I am a murderer.'

Reason and logic, when tempered with human considerations, can be instruments of great good. Taken out of proportion they become in their turn – as much as the physical and the spiritual if exalted beyond their place in the threefold nature of life – evils, and instruments of tragedy.

COMMONSENSE AND THE MIND

To sum up:

If you feel yourself to be intellectually superior to the general run of mankind, it will be well to remember how near is even the most brilliant of us to the lower races from which mankind has grown. When we look at the world to-day, it is

only too plain that something greater than ourselves is needed to cope with the problems of to-day and to-morrow. Why should not the need produce them, as in the past necessity produced new creatures, and, at last, mankind? As yet, however, there is little to choose between us, and none of us approaches anywhere near the type of Perfected Man who may yet arise.

Another error to which you may be liable is the tendency to place too great an accent upon intellect, neglecting to develop physical health and strength, without which, however, nothing but a fitful brilliance can be attained.

The third is to take the easy way of excusing faults of character on the ground that they are negligible in comparison with superior mentality, or that they are justifiable by pure reason. This can constitute a spiritual suicide, ruling out all possibility of inner harmony and contentment.

Conversely: if you feel yourself to be intellectually inferior compared with others, NOW is the time to seek within yourself the compensating aptitudes which discouragement may have prevented your seeking. Where any handicap exists, there is usually some compensating factor. Those unsuccessful in academic subjects may well have natural aptitudes in quite other directions – the 'mechanical mind', the craftsman's hands, or a flair for human relationships.

As we gradually move forward to a system of education based not merely upon academic honours, it may well be that such natural aptitudes will be discovered and developed, saving many a so-called 'dull' child from being branded with its insufficiency in what is, after all, only one branch of human activity.

Whatever your intellectual capacity, remember that this is only one part of the threefold life you have to live, which should be so regarded, and developed to a harmony with physical and spiritual activity.

Chapter 6

*

ARE YOU 'IN HARMONY' WITH YOUR SPIRIT?

ONLY a rash and opinionated person would try to deny that man's spirit is a very real part of his nature. It is true that, especially during the last century, men have reacted against cant and hypocrisy by trying to make of materialism a creed in itself. It seems to be as yet beyond human wisdom to keep an even balance of opinion and action; a phase of over-stress upon one kind of theory is always followed by a reaction which swings correspondingly too far in the other direction.

Strangely enough, however, the iconoclasts of the last century were, even in opposing the conceptions current at the time, living a spiritual life of their own. To oppose one brand of spiritual activity upon the basis of 'principle' is necessarily to oppose to it another brand of spiritual activity, even if of a mistaken kind. Indeed, the extremists, those most devoted to 'dialectical materialism', have turned the whole thing inside-out, and made of their materialism a new religion – a religion, moreover, which has all the symptoms of a fanaticism equally ready with any other kind of bigotry to deliver its opponents to faggots and stake.

The sincere and altruistic revolutionary, whatever the deep instincts which have caused him to revolt against society, has usually for his object the attainment of a new society which shall – at least in theory – bring justice, freedom and a higher standard of living to the community. This is in essence a selfless aim. However mistaken he may be in his methods, and indeed in his theories, by the plain fact of taking thought for communal welfare, he is engaging in a spiritual life. The

spirit so far pervades all that it cannot even be opposed without spiritual action.

The ardour which in past ages has gone into support of organized religion has in our day found many other means of expression. That ardour, however, remains the same, whatever form it may take. It is a statement, in new terms, of the spirituality, the sense of values beyond self-seeking, which seems to be an indispensable and indestructible part of the nature of Man. It has the same dangers and the same abuses as in the past – in bigotry to which we have already referred (expressed in our time in political, instead of religious, intolerance) and also a kind of 'spiritual pride'. This fault, parallel to that of 'intellectual pride' in those who place greatest emphasis upon mentality, is the pitfall awaiting those who have taken even spirituality out of context as a part only of human nature, and have tried to make it all.

There are few people so obstinate as the spiritually conceited, for they carry about with them the perfect assurance that they are right, and everyone else wrong. Yet that very fact should make them pause. Let us therefore try to examine how far we ourselves may have fallen into this final error of disproportion.

DO YOU TEND TO TAKE IT UPON YOURSELF TO JUDGE OTHERS?

The tendency to pass hasty judgement upon others is a failing so common that there may indeed be no-one on this earth who is not prone to it. You may ask why it should be regarded as a failing; you may feel that if your own actions are to be measured by a certain standard, then you cannot refrain from judging others by the same measure.

There are not, perhaps, many people left to-day who believe themselves to be in possession of the infallible yardstick for judgement of human conduct. Of those who do, most of them devotees of organized religion, many make a

sincere endeavour to live by their standard. All honour to them for that, especially if they are able to succeed to a reasonable degree.

Yet it is when such people lapse, even in their thoughts, from the high standard which they have set themselves, that they need to watch most carefully lest their harshest judgement be given to similar offences committed by others. In our anxiety to think highly of ourselves, we often tend to transfer the guilt of our own failures upon those whom we may observe to be doing what we ourselves have done, or have wished to do, and of which we are ashamed.

In this connexion, it is worth noting that, deep down inside ourselves, we rightly recognize that the wish to do a thing comes very near to doing it. Spiritually considered, indeed, it is the same thing – unless the temptation has been openly confronted and consciously defeated.

Thus it may happen that a business man, having refrained from a piece of sharp practice which would have enriched him, is all the more loud in condemnation of chicanery in others. If that condemnation passes reasonable bounds, it may well be because he is unconsciously aware that he has repressed an inner and most probably unadmitted urge to do likewise. Fearing to face the truth about himself, he is more likely to be harsh in his judgements than another man who has recognized himself to be tempted and has consciously put temptation behind him. It requires the truly pure in heart to say: *Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more.*

Ordinary folk are likely to come nearest to this ideal by frankly asking themselves the reason for the harshness of their judgements, and, even if they cannot trace it, by abstaining from censure of any but themselves. Such abstention from censure is, in fact, a forbearance we owe to others in payment for our debt to humanity for our own shortcomings.

We cannot know the total background to other people's errors. Only with great travail can we learn, patiently and slowly, the background to our own mistakes. We can try to

assess our own endowment – physical, mental and emotional; in heredity and environment – because, if we care to face it, we are in possession of nearly all the available evidence about ourselves. We should also be aware in some degree of the strength of our temptations, and of our likely strength to meet them.

If self-knowledge none the less requires the great effort which we know it does, how then can we hope ever to be in a position to judge other people? We lack detailed knowledge of their heredity and environment. We have not their memories and experience. We cannot even begin to make a total assessment of any one of them. We cannot, that is to say, know exactly what has contributed to make them what they seem to be. However little we may like what we can see of them, or of their actions, however justified we may at first sight feel ourselves to be in passing judgement, still we must abstain – because any such censure can only be made in ignorance of the essential facts.

DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR BELIEFS (RELIGIOUS, PHILOSOPHICAL OR POLITICAL) ARE THE ONLY TRUE GUIDE IN LIVING?

Those who live by an accepted standard, of whatever nature, have strong temptation to bigotry, to a refusal to believe that other creeds can provide a basis for good life. This is especially pitiful because, on the whole, most religions, philosophies and even (in these days) political creeds, do seek similar ends. It is on the means by which these ends are to be accomplished that opinions differ.

Nor, unfortunately, do they remain merely opinions. Most of us, holding a certain view, inevitably seem to adopt the attitude that it is the only one possible. Further, we tend to look upon it almost as our own personal possession – an extension of ourselves – so that we resent criticism of it in the

same way as we do criticism of ourselves, and will defend it at all costs. When the final objectives of our opponents are really very similar to our own, it is a pity that we permit partisanship to accent the *differences* rather than the points of mutual agreement.

So far as religion is concerned, it might be well for the bigoted to remember that they would almost certainly be just as immovable in their adherence to some quite different faith but for the accident of birth in place and time. The fanatical Nonconformist might have been the fanatical Moslem or Hindu, or devotee of Isis or of Jupiter. A fanaticism which denies any such possibility is burying its head, ostrich-like, in the sand.

The sincerely religious may argue that, although they *might* have been born in other places or times and with other faiths, that does not necessarily invalidate the creed in which they believe. Of course, that is so. The faith, and the rules of life which it teaches, has a right to be considered upon its intrinsic merit; and many people do, in fact, feel that conviction as apart from mere prejudice assures them that their belief is the true one.

Even if such be the case, they are still not necessarily right in assuming that others may not be helped by their own different beliefs. The fundamental tenets of most of the great religions are similar, and would seem to have a common basis of philosophic truth. It is very well to live by our own good standard; it, is, however, quite another thing to insist that it is the *only* standard.

Even where persons appear to have no religious life – in the sense that they are not church-goers – still they may have reached philosophic conclusions which act as a sound guide to living. Ultimately, every man must face his own conscience. To try to intervene between him and the beliefs he holds is an unwarrantable interference.

Certainly, some people manage at quite an early age to 'square' their consciences by self-deception and self-justification

in the most remarkable way. These are the men and women who harm others, and go on doing so, whenever immediate self-interest dictates it – very seldom recognizing that they are 'in sin'. Even here, however, though secure in your own faith and perhaps anxious to help such a person, you have no warrant to condemn. Help by all means, if that is possible – but, as a human being, you are yourself much too open to error to be justified in censure of others.

Where, on the other hand, you find men and women of goodwill whose religious or political theories are quite different from your own, why not concentrate upon trying to find the common ground of good intent, instead of engaging in futile argument upon differences of opinion?

DO YOU KEEP RELIGION FOR SUNDAYS, OR TRY TO APPLY YOUR BELIEFS IN DAILY LIVING?

Few people would be likely to give an affirmative answer to this question; yet observation is likely to convince us that, in fact, there must be quite a number who should do so if they were to answer it in fullest honesty. It is possible, therefore, that we ourselves are numbered among those who have not yet faced this rather unpleasant fact.

What should we find if we took careful note of our actions day by day, and tried to sum up whether or not, in fact, we carried out in the small things of daily life the beliefs we preach? No doubt we should find many failures.

That need not, in itself, be a cause for despair. We all meet occasions when, although we realize very well what our course of action should be, we are unable to carry it through because of weak or incomplete self-discipline. We can only do our human best. Yet how many of us really do even that? It is so tempting, and so easy – to list a few of the minor 'sins' which cause so much trouble – to repeat a bit of gossip, to grab the best place or position for ourselves, or to let our own

desire for happiness overshadow the fact that others have a right to it too.

Few people are wantonly evil. Most of the world's miseries arise because we do not stop to think, or to ask ourselves whether or not we can have exactly what we want without causing harm to others. Yet there is one commandment upon which all the religions of the world agree: *Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.*

We all know that by heart. Yet there are many occasions when we neglect to make a conscious effort to act upon it. We are so liable to jump to the conclusion that what we want is necessarily right. We find it so easy to deceive and justify ourselves – an unconscious process which can be controlled only if we will take the precaution to keep watch against its possibility. A little self-control, following such a pause for thought, can often save us from becoming involved in difficulties which may later grow to such proportions that we cannot in the end escape from them without hurting others – not to speak of ourselves.

A religion – in which term we may include any ethical standard upon which we try to act – which is merely a 'Sunday' one, thought of only on devotional occasions or during philosophic argument, is worse than none at all. It gives us moments when we can complacently pat ourselves on the back, telling ourselves how good we are either for the observance of mere ceremony, or for having such high-minded ideals.

There is little hope of any spiritual progress while we are in such a state of mind. Progress, in fact, can only follow humility. We are all prone to error, and can grow nearer to spiritual fulfilment only through constant effort in daily life to carry out in action the principles to which we give lip-service. To make such progress it is not necessary to be a saint – but to accept ourselves and others as human beings, sharing similar failings and reaching up, however gropingly, to a common goal.

COMMONSENSE AND THE SPIRIT

To sum up:

Let us judge ourselves more harshly than we have been in the habit of doing, facing the facts about ourselves as frankly as we can. Let us, on the other hand, abstain from judging others, since we cannot know the background to their faults.

Let us live by our own creed, constantly watchful against our own lapses. Let us not, on the other hand, try to force it upon other people – who must be allowed to live, worship and believe as seems best to them.

Let us remember that it is in the many tiny trials and difficulties of every day that we need to make most effort to live up to our own best ideals. The acts of kindness which sweeten life should not be 'occasions', but part of the interwoven threads of daily existence.

Our spiritual life is a very real part of our threefold existence, not to be developed at the expense of body and mind, but to be harmoniously blended with our life upon those two other planes.

GRAMASEVAKS TRAINING CENTRE
16 APR 1955
T. KALLUPATTI

PART II

The Application of Self-Knowledge in the Daily Conduct of Life

*

The aim of Part I of this book has been to outline the principles which underlie not merely human life, but all life – indeed, all existence. If there is some pattern in the Universe – and there is good evidence for it – then the surest way to contentment will be to follow out a similar pattern in our own individual and communal lives.

Part II has therefore been designed to examine how best we can carry into practical life our realization of the pattern of which we are all a part. The succeeding chapters may therefore seem almost trivial by comparison with the 'higher' theorizing which has gone before. They are however intended to serve as a guide in the ordinary conduct of daily life – which, after all, is made up of many little things.

The reference must therefore be, not so much to general ideals, as to the small problems of daily life. Yet perhaps, for that very reason, it may help you to apply in your own life the principles which make for Successful Living.

Chapter 7

*

HOW TO ATTEMPT A 'PERSONAL ASSESSMENT'

THE common goal of human life would seem to be to reach fulfilment and harmony, both within ourselves and in our relationship to the whole stream of life of which we are part. Surely, then, our starting-point must be to attain a clear understanding of ourselves – or one, at least, as clear as is possible to fallible human beings.

We must try to see ourselves clearly, as we really are. We should try to gain some insight into the causes which have made us develop into what we are. Only thus will it become possible to make a conscious effort to deflect that development, where necessary, into new and more constructive paths.

Much harm has been done by popular misunderstanding of psychology. To a great extent, that may well be the fault of the psychologists themselves, because of the great stress which they have placed upon the effects of heredity and environment in moulding character.

It is very true that childhood experiences and teachings leave a strong mark. It is not, however, true that this mark need be absolutely ineradicable. Those who claim that we can *never* escape from the bonds of early experience are taking too simple and easy a way out from personal responsibility. Many of us do not, in fact, escape, but the way is almost always open, if we care to look for it.

The first step is self-knowledge.

That is, of course, very easy to say, and very easy to write; but is it so easy to practise? It will be best if we face up at once to the fact that it is not. Indeed, the attainment of self-

knowledge is one of the hardest tasks which a man or woman can set for him- or herself; yet, like many other hard tasks, it will, in the end, be among the most rewarding.

In the chapters which follow, there will be found a number of questions pertinent to us all. It might be a good idea to leaf over the pages and pick out those italicized questions, devoting some time here and now to frank self-examination upon them, before reading the paragraphs which follow in each case.

Of course, you will understand that a full 'stock-taking' of oneself cannot be made complete in so simple a way. The questions you will find in these pages have been framed merely to provide an *indication* of the correct approach in trying to obey the age-old adage: *Know Thyself*. In fact, the further you progress along the road to self-knowledge, the more you will be able to ask yourself further questions, especially those which will have a bearing upon your own particular make-up and temperament.

It goes without saying that the conclusions we may reach in attempting self-knowledge can be of use only if made in complete frankness. We all have blind spots. We are all too prone to be lenient with ourselves. Many people are almost incapable of realizing facts about themselves which are quite obvious to all around them. We tend to forgive our own shortcomings much more readily than we forgive those of others.

If we are truly honest, the first result of our self-analysis will be the discovery of our own limitations; and if we are sensible, this should give us a feeling of *humility*. There is, however, no reason why it should give us a sense of *inferiority*. That is a very different thing. A feeling of excessive inferiority is not healthy; but a proper sense of humility can have a positive value in helping us to understand ourselves and others. It should help us to recognize that our faults are in the main those which are common to all mankind – as, indeed, are our good points. We shall then be able to appreciate that our thoughts and feelings are not so essentially in-

dividual as we have believed. They are rather something shared by all in the community in which we live.

We all have the feeling that we are something separate and special, and it usually comes as a surprise to us to find that others think the same. We all have the parallel feeling that perhaps we are inferior to others, and, again, it is often quite a pleasant shock to us to find that this feeling also does not belong to us alone.

Both these feelings are usually illusions. Each of us is 'separate and special' – and that applies to our neighbour as much as to ourselves. Each of us harbours a suspicion that he may be inferior, and tries to compensate for that feeling by telling himself that he may be superior. The truth, of course, is that we all are made of much the same stuff, gaining or losing in the end through our own qualities or shortcomings. Everything we may say or do sets up reactions in others, so that we can never be justified in thinking of ourselves as beings apart, striving only for personal gain or advancement.

It is, however, necessary, in attempting to assess what we are, to take ourselves 'out of context' for a while. It is not a healthy thing to pass all our life in concentration upon self, any more than it is a healthy thing to pamper the body and pass all our time in anxiety about our physical well-being. There are moments, however, when we should make a deliberate effort to face the facts about ourselves, and this is especially the case if we have a suspicion that somewhere and somehow we have missed the right path in life.

HOW TO USE A 'PERSONAL ASSESSMENT'

Let us suppose that we have looked at the questions which follow in this book, have thought them well over, and have perhaps added others which have special pertinence for ourselves in a way which no-one but ourselves can really know. What is likely to be the total result of our self-analysis?

If we have given ourselves full marks, perhaps we should think again. We are, after all, acting as our own judge and jury. Perhaps we have tempered justice with too much mercy towards the 'prisoner'. Second thoughts may reveal certain weaknesses which we prefer not to admit, but which do none the less have a way of tripping us up, sometimes quite unexpectedly. We have got to be strong, and admit them.

There are two ways in which inner frankness or honesty will be useful:

(1) it will indicate the measures we need to take in order to make ourselves successful as human beings;
(2) it will show the need, and the opportunity, to understand and where necessary to forgive the failures of others – which are likely to arise from much the same causes as our own.

Having once frankly recognized in full what we are, there is nothing to be gained by sitting back and saying: 'Oh yes, I know I'm like that, but . . .' and then to go on to give plausible explanations of how life has made us so. Our explanations may be quite truthful so far as they go – but they will get us nowhere. The only positive thing to do is to search out ways in which we can overcome our handicaps, and, if necessary, even reverse the effects which they have had upon us.

We must be strict with ourselves. We have no right to be strict with others.

There is very good reason for this – good reason, indeed, to adopt it as one of our chief rules of life. It is definitely not a question of cant or sentimentality. The reason lies in the fact that we have a natural bias in our own favour.

If we play a game with a ball which has a bias in one direction we know that a special effort is needed to deflect it to a straight course. We are playing the game of life with a ball which is biassed indeed. Only when we fully realize this do we begin to understand why we so often do selfish and mean things without any such *conscious* intention.

This is true of ourselves. It is also true of almost everyone else. Therefore the result of our self-examination, and of the self-discipline which should follow, should not be to make us harsh upon other people. We all have a certain tendency towards self-righteousness. When once we have beaten down our own worse failings, or subdued in ourselves some temptation, we are likely to become so spiritually proud of the fact that we resent seeing others give in to the faults or weaknesses which we have with pains overcome.

That is not good enough, because it means that we are exalting ourselves above others, and cutting ourselves off from them, in such a way that we lose, by falling into new error, whatever merit we may have gained by avoiding the old. Self-understanding and self-discipline will be truly useful only if they help us to understand the weaknesses and temptations of others, and to make allowance for the fact that perhaps they have not learned the need for self-knowledge, or been given sufficient strength of character to gain it. Nor can we know how much greater their handicaps and difficulties may have been than our own.

The greater tolerance and breadth of mind which come from humble self-knowledge will bring positive results, enriching our lives with the gratitude and affections of others. We shall often be disappointed by those who take advantage of kindness, it is true. There are many who still cannot distinguish spiritual strength from mere weakness. We may, indeed, have to find from experience the point at which too-long-continued kindness does become weakness. Yet it will always be better to err on the side of kindness and tolerance, rather than refuse understanding to others whose human failings we share.

Great love, or sudden emergency, often calls out the best in us; there are few, however unreliable in smaller things, who are not capable of great self-sacrifice and courage under such stress. For the purpose, however, of fighting the day-to-day battle against our own selfish impulses, the surest way is

the gradual development of self-control through the small acts of self-mastery in which most of us so often fail.

Our full development as human beings can come about only by careful self-watchfulness and honest endeavour to treat others with the same consideration we expect from them. We begin to learn this lesson from the earliest days of our lives, changing from the 'king in the perambulator' into a member of the family, where rights and obligations go side by side. Unfortunately, we often later forget to extend it beyond the family into the wider community of which we become a part.

As infants and children, we learn, directly or indirectly, that others exist beside ourselves, and that their right to existence, equal with our own, necessarily involves some curtailment of our otherwise selfish activities. We learn that control of certain physical functions to the right time and place makes for the general comfort. We learn to forbear from creating noise or nuisance which may disturb others. We come to understand that the impulses to violence which arise in us all at times must be restrained – for the good of others, and for our own good as well.

If we stop short there, and refuse to realize that membership of the wider community implies in addition that self-seeking must be curbed for the general good, then we become anti-social nuisances. If rights and obligations go side by side in family life, so also they do in communal life, into which we enter as we become adult.

Unethical business methods are disliked and condemned, and so is the man who practises them, because they are in fact an affront to the communal good. Unrestrained, they bring about anarchy, a vicious scramble which reduces public life to jungle level and causes a general lowering of standards which in the end must react upon the welfare of all.

Similar causes and effects may also be clearly seen in the sphere of sexual life, in which so many of our errors are committed. People who count themselves perfectly honourable

will in this connexion throw overboard all their normal scruples, and find many ingenious reasons for doing so. Yet if there is one thing which we have painfully learned over the years, it is that sexual life cannot be a free-for-all with nothing barred. Human sexuality cannot be equated with animal sexuality, for it involves communion and inter-action not only upon the physical plane, but upon both mental and spiritual planes as well.

Human beings *can*, it is true, live like animals, in sex, in the home, and in business too, if they want to be sharks and jackals. But that is not the tendency which best fulfils the laws of our being. On the contrary, where it happens, it is a symptom of deep disturbance within the individual – of a block in our emotional growth.

It must surely be taken as fundamental that the aim of any thinking man or woman is to develop into full manhood or womanhood, attaining the full status of humanity. If that is so, we must try to extend what we learned from the first basic lessons of control of childish behaviour, into those more complicated problems of human conduct which arise on the mental and spiritual planes.

As human beings, our lives will always be in need of 'running repairs'. If there is one thing common to us all, it is that we all make mistakes, and tend to go on making them, all through our lives. If we wrap ourselves in spiritual cotton-wool, refusing to admit that our opinions and actions can ever be wrong, then our faults, under this muffling, cannot help but grow worse.

If, however, with pains similar to those with which a baby gradually learns control, we try to extend control in every field of our life – forming the habit of self-examination and correction – we can scarcely fail to increase our usefulness both to society and to ourselves.

We should begin first with the 'little' things, remembering that this is not for their sake alone so much as to begin the formation of a good habit – always so potent in life.

The way to self-improvement cannot be easy; anyone who thinks it can be has not seen very far below the surface of his own nature. If we attempt it, we shall have many lapses and pass through days when it seems that we are not getting anywhere, even in elementary control of ourselves. Yet, with persistence, with care to develop the *habit* of remembering that we exist as social beings and not as solitaries, we shall very gradually find that we are adding to the total sum of understanding, and therefore of human happiness.

As that total sum grows, so must our share in it.

Chapter 8

*

THE SUM OF YOUR 'PERSONAL ASSESSMENT' – I

PERHAPS the most practical approach to the many small problems which beset us all, and which, in total, result in nearly all the difficulties of daily living, will be to consider a series of representative questions which bear upon the main faults we all share.

There would, of course, be almost no end to such questions, if we settled down to analyse in detail the many trivial errors we make from day to day. Those which follow are intended, not to cover the ground completely, but rather to provide convenient starting-points from which to examine the conduct of our daily life.

i. When things go wrong, am I inclined to blame others?

Our answer to this question, if we are strictly honest, is almost bound to be 'yes'. We may qualify that answer by pleading that we always make a strong effort to shoulder our own share of the blame when things go wrong – but the hard fact is that we all tend to blame others more quickly and easily than ourselves.

As we have noted already, there are two general reasons for this:

(a) we are usually positively watching for faults in others, whereas an equally objective, 'outside', approach to ourselves can be gained only through control and training;

(b) we tend to criticize others all the more relentlessly

because we do not want to admit that we ourselves have temptations similar to theirs.

All this is human and natural enough, understandable and forgivable. But is it desirable that we should go on in this way? The error which we commit, and the wrong we do, when we blame others for our own mistakes, may have consequences so far-reaching that in the end we injure ourselves far more in practical fact, and in other people's eyes, than we would have done had we faced our own responsibility in the beginning.

The harm we do is threefold:

(a) to the person blamed;

(b) to our relationship with that person, and with anyone else who may observe what has happened;

(c) to ourselves.

In the first case, suppose we do someone a positive injury. This is likely to occur in business life, when quickly, self-protectively, without giving ourselves time to think, we lay the blame for an error at someone else's door. The matter may be trivial, the injury may be trivial; that does not make the fact any more justifiable.

In the second case, it must naturally follow from the first that someone we have thus injured, in even the smallest way, will nourish a certain resentment. Moreover, we ourselves, by the sheer fact of knowing ourselves guilty of an unfairness, are certain to harbour a dislike of the person concerned, arising from our own suppressed sense of guilt towards them. In that way, from the tiniest beginnings, antagonisms may spring up which are quite needless, and may in the future bring a long train of unfortunate consequences.

Nor can we escape some injury in the eyes of any dispassionate observers, who, though they may understand and forgive our human weakness, cannot fail at the same time to see it in an unfavourable light.

And what of the injury we do to ourselves? That damage is not negligible merely because we do not realize that it is there. Every time we forgive ourselves a fault, we strengthen the hold of that fault upon ourselves. Every time we try to pretend that our weaknesses just are not there, we lessen our own strength to combat and overcome them.

Yet we are doing this kind of thing all the time – nowhere, perhaps, so often or so mischievously as in our home life. Family life, which should be the finest foundation of our society, is only too often a source of miseries which are carried over from one generation to the next for the very reason that we tend (in our familiarity with our nearest relatives) to behave very much worse at home than we dare to do elsewhere.

There can hardly be any more painful sight than estrangement between brothers and sisters, or between parents and children. Yet it is not rare. Nor are the causes usually any deep division of interests or ideas, or any positive ill-will. They are commonly the neglect of both parents and children to apply in daily home life even such good manners or moral principles as they may use outside the home.

In love, and in marriage, we are prone to similar mistakes. The main reason for this is probably the wrong attitude which is inculcated in young people from their earliest years, not only by the conversation which goes on around them, but by the books they read and the films they see. Most young people grow up so firmly impressed with the legend of romantic love, that they do, in fact, expect to 'fall in love' suddenly one day with some marvellous being of the other sex, marry, and 'live happily ever after'.

Seldom is marriage presented to them as the effort at joint living of two fallible human beings of different heredity, background and temperament – in which each will be liable to make mistakes. It is not surprising, therefore, that when things go wrong in love or in marriage, the first tendency is

to blame the partner who has failed to be the creature of legend expected.

It is quite possible to win another person's love without having really deserved it. Indeed, if we waited for our 'deserts', how many of us would be loved to anything like the degree that we are? 'Deserved' is the word used here, because the gift of a man's or woman's sincere affection is not to be lightly regarded or wantonly thrown away. There is too little real, unselfish love in the world for us to be able to afford to treat it lightly. Yet if love may be easily won, it is not so easily kept. Surely it is worth some effort in self-understanding, so that we do not wreck it by taking the too-easy way of blaming our partner in such small disagreements as are bound to occur?

Since our friend or partner is a human being, he or she may well in any given instance be wrong. On the other hand, for just the same reason, we may ourselves be wrong in this case. It is worth while to exercise some patience, and try to be a little understanding and charitable, when the other person annoys or offends us. It is still more worth while to face up to the facts when the mistake is on our own side.

This, indeed, is the first rule of human relationships, whether in business, at home or in love:

Never blame others before first examining and questioning your own conduct.

ii. Am I as generous with praise as with criticism?

Alas – the answer this time, for most of us, is likely to be 'no'. We human beings, out of our innate weakness, tend on the whole to find it much more easy to criticize than to be generous.

Why should this be?

There are three main reasons which are connected with each other:

(a) To criticize others compensates for our own feelings

of inadequacy and inferiority, and for our inner sense of our own shortcomings. We gain release from these feelings of inferiority by projecting them upon those whom we criticize.

(b) On the other hand, we are niggardly in bestowing praise because we feel that in praising someone else we dispraise ourselves.

(c) To praise them, especially for a quality which we know that we lack, seems like a denial of our own worth. To criticize someone else gives us the opportunity to feel good by comparison.

These statements may seem very sweeping, yet if we are honest enough to examine our own instinctive reactions we are likely to find that on the whole they are true.

Most of us tend to criticize other people to a quite extraordinary degree, even though we may be fully persuaded that we never judge or condemn. Indeed, it very often happens that those of us who are careful not to pass judgements upon the larger issues, still continue, every day of our lives, to throw out unthinking comments which do in fact amount to criticism of others: of their beliefs, character, work and ways of living. Yet it is the swift, biting phrase, heedlessly uttered in the course of daily routine and about which we are all so careless, which can yield the unhappiest results.

By contrast, how seldom do we spontaneously praise anyone or anything! It is sad to think that we are nearly all so basically unsure of ourselves that we seem to feel we cannot afford to give any but grudging recognition of worth or talent in others.

Yet what tremendous good might come if we could breed into the human race a natural inhibition from light criticism of each other. That does not mean, of course, that there are not occasions, public and private, when it is necessary to point out the errors of others or to rebuke their offences against ourselves. Always to swallow rebuffs and ill-treatment

can be as harmful to the other person, and to our relationship with him, as to flare up in anger out of all proportion to the offence.

Where rebuke is justified in fact, then that rebuke should be considered, not thoughtless. Given by someone who has already shown great control and understanding, it is likely to have far more weight than from someone known to be in the habit of ill-considered criticism, for the offender will have no opportunity to console himself by putting himself in the right in his own eyes. Nor, in such a case, is there any good to be done by 'keeping on' about a mistake which has already been pointed out. To nag, or to use injurious expressions which can do no practical good, does end by putting the offender in the right after all, and only embitters the relationship.

Where praise can be given, then for heaven's sake let us give it, overcoming the ungenerous streak which so often holds us back from doing so. Sincere praise – as distinct from flattery – pleases the other person as much as it does ourselves, and can be a great encouragement in the performance of daily tasks. If we find any difficulty in giving such praise where we know it is due, then we must ask ourselves how it comes about that we are so fundamentally unsure of ourselves that we have this feeling that we cannot afford to be truly generous-hearted.

Tact, appreciation and self-control are all equally effective in smoothing the running of office and home. In every case, the persons around us are human beings whose nature and needs are similar to our own. I repeat this, because in this realization lies the key (so far as any one thing can be) to successful living. From it, we might frame a few simple rules which will hold good in all walks of life:

Handle other people's pride as tenderly as if it were your own.

Try to abstain from all light criticism, and to speak as many 'good words' for others every day as you possibly can.

When serious criticism is necessary, preface it with some

phrase of understanding and appreciation, and never 'rub it in'.

Where praise is deserved, be generous – and give it.

iii. When worried, do I tend to vent my irritability on others?

This third question is, of course, related to the first and second, and although it is not of so fundamental a character as they are, still it touches upon one of the more trivial ways in which we can all cause a great deal of trouble. Irritability is generally displayed over trifles which have in themselves small importance; none the less, continual irritability can turn life into a daily misery – and because of the very smallness of the incidents involved we do not usually take so much trouble to control it as we might in the case of something seemingly more important.

We nearly all go through phases when we are irritable with those around us, not so much because we have any reason to be annoyed with them as through a need to 'let off steam' in some direction. The resentments and worries which accumulate within us seem to seize the first available outlet, even though it may in fact be the least suitable and the least appropriate. This is all the more difficult to control because such lapses usually occur (unless they have become a pernicious habit) when we are both mentally and physically jaded, and therefore less able to maintain a sustained effort to keep ourselves in hand.

Such happenings are really too common to need examples. We might, however, instance the man who is difficult at work because of worries at home – or, conversely, the man, or more frequently the woman, whose work suffers through domestic difficulties.

Hard as it may seem to call upon ourselves at such times for an extra effort in self-control, yet it is the only way to a solution of our troubles. Once we have got into a state of irritability, we set up friction all round which cannot fail to 'come back upon' ourselves. We make life more difficult for those around us, and that must inevitably in the end only

make life more difficult for ourselves, fraying the tempers and wearing out the patience of those who have to live and work with us, however much they may love and respect us. It is of little use to be competent in our work, if we make the lives of others miserable. It is of little use to be ambitious for business success, if we earn the name of a 'tartar' or an 'insubordinate'. It is of little use to love and care for husband or wife, if we snap off his or her head at every opportunity. It is in such ways that careers and marriages are broken, far more often than through dramatic crises.

All this seems very obvious. We all acknowledge it. We only have, unfortunately, to put it into practice. The best way would seem to be, not to attempt an 'over-night' cure, but to try out one or two hesitating first steps in greater control.

We are all, of course, very differently constituted, although the stuff of which we are made is much the same. Some people have a much larger amount of natural 'aggression', or 'drive', than others. But it can never be a full excuse for any fault to say that we are 'made that way'. It is some explanation, and one which those who love us will accept as such – but it is no more than that.

There remains a positive effort to be made, to overcome a disability which may be making life difficult both for others and for ourselves.

It is unfair to make others suffer for your own state of mind or health. It is unfair to yourself not to show yourself to others in a better light.

Chapter 9

*

THE SUM OF YOUR 'PERSONAL ASSESSMENT' – II

iv. Do I always try to understand the other person's point of view?

THERE is little to which each of us tends to cling so doggedly as to a view-point which we have adopted as our own. It does not seem to matter how we have come by it. Once it is *ours*, we treat it as a personal attribute, something which has become a part of ourselves, and which must be defended as certainly as we defend ourselves against attack. We seem, as it were, like people who can only love possessively – loving not the object of their affection, but themselves through him or her – to say 'this view is *mine*', or even 'this view is *me*'. Even the most fair-minded among us will often find himself tending to react in this way. Let a cherished opinion be questioned or derided, and its holder reacts so intensely that he feels his heart-beats quickened with indignation, his blood rising to his face, his throat constricted. So closely are our bodies, minds and spirits bound up together.

Yet, surely, if once we can recognize within ourselves this strong inclination to hold by opinions once adopted – and the proselytizing zeal which possesses most of us to convert others to the views we hold – we should take very great care about the manner in which we come by our views.

So very many of our cherished opinions are merely prejudices, or the result of prejudices, or are grown from purely emotional reactions to the circumstances which we have met in life. If opinions are to sway us to so great a degree as they do, we must take some care that they shall have solid foundation in fact.

Sit down for a while, and examine to what degree your thoughts and actions are swayed by certain fixed views, and the extent to which you expect others to honour those views as being yours. Then ask yourself whether, when conflict of views arises, you habitually give to other people's opinions the amount of reasoned consideration which you would demand of them for your own ideas.

Those of us who have passed adolescence, particularly if we have reached adult years without taking any very great care or conscious thought in regard to the development of our own personality, would do well to turn out the lumber-room of our preconceived opinions. For that is exactly what most of us have – somewhere between brain and emotions – a lumber-room jammed up with views to which we lovingly cling although they may be not merely useless, but positively in the way.

Nor is that expression 'in the way' at all strained. If we are so self-opinionated that any view novel to us simply slides off the surface of our mail of prejudice, we are standing in the light of our own chances of development and growth – and the whole of life should be a continued growth.

No-one who loves books would build a library, furnish it with shelves, stock it with books and leave no room at all for new volumes. Someone might do that, of course, who merely wanted to 'make an impression' on visitors, and for the purpose he would probably buy up a whole library which he would never use. The true lover of knowledge, however, would be likely to give loving care to the growth of his library, preferring to begin with empty shelves and to add gradually to his growing store volumes for which he had genuine respect.

Now, no one of us can begin, in this sense, with perfectly empty shelves. It is probable that even when we arrive in this world, we carry over with us from our heredity tendencies to certain states of mind. Certainly, throughout childhood, we imbibe views which are the daily currency of our surround-

ings – through the teachings and example of parents and teachers, books and films, and through the impressions gained from what happens to us in life.

If, however, we are ever to gain control of the contents of our personal 'lumber-room', the time must come when we shall give it an inspection.

We all know people who have never bothered to do this. They are the ones who say dogmatically, 'this is so', and will never permit you to get a word in edgeways if you want to cast a doubt upon their assertions. Yet do we not, perhaps, ourselves, also sometimes act in a similar way?

Of course, if we think for a moment, we shall understand that when we do this, it is just as annoying for other people as it is for us when others do it. Indeed, we are bound to see that such dogmatism is not necessarily a proof of certain knowledge, but rather only of arrogance. And why does arrogance arise in us? Surely only because, feeling ourselves of small account in some direction, we try to redress the balance by asserting ourselves in another. Dogmatism on any subject, therefore, unless it be upon a matter of *fact* in which we are qualified as experts, can only indicate a deep-rooted sense of inferiority, and very probably also of insecurity, which we are trying to escape by taking refuge in the security of our prejudice.

It is in such ways as this that, by a complicated mechanism, our primitive reactions govern our reason, so that, despite Man's claim to be the reasonable animal, in fact, the overwhelming majority of mankind are still swayed by their primitive nature to so great a degree that they cannot get their personal or public lives into any kind of order.

If we want to find out to what extent this is true of ourselves, we must watch our own reactions next time we enter into argument upon any matter upon which we feel deeply. The subject may be religious, political or moral. Whatever it is, if we hold strong views in any of these directions, we should take an early opportunity to study our own reactions when

next someone puts a point of view opposed to that which we ourselves hold.

Can we hear the other person out without straining to interrupt? Can we keep our replies within the bounds of reasoned argument without becoming vehement, abusive or unkind? Are we able, even while rejecting our opponent's outlook, at any rate to understand *why* he thinks as he does, and to concede to him the right to continue to do so?

Most of us, while listening to an opponent, are not really giving him our whole attention. On the contrary, by far the greater part of our consciousness is devoted to the preparation of our own argument. We are so interested in getting our own ideas over, that even to the degree to which we do give him our attention it is only in order to seize upon points which may stimulate us to express our own ideas more forcibly.

In this, we closely resemble the person who asks for advice, desiring only to be told to do what he has already decided that he wants to do. Now, when a person rejects advice given by someone disinterestedly kind, wise and experienced, it is always because the advice given does not chime with his own strong if unconscious intention. If you have yourself ever rejected advice in this manner, you will know the symptoms of disappointment and almost of anger which you felt with the adviser for not having said what you wanted to hear.

So it is when we refuse to listen to the point of view of someone else upon a matter in which we are so deeply prejudiced that our emotions are involved in what should usually be a matter of cold reason. In fact, it may be said that if we find ourselves emotionally unable to listen with full attention and undivided concentration to the expression of views contrary to our own, then we should at once suspect ourselves of being prompted in the formulation of our ideas upon the matter not by reason and experience, but by prejudice pure and simple.

That calls for a turn-out of the lumber-room, and a careful

examination not merely of the nature of each article stored there, but also of its origins and usefulness.

Why, you may ask, should we bother? For it is likely to be a cumbersome business to track down the origins of our prejudices into the half-forgotten things of childhood and youth, and will involve very careful self-examination under the microscope of our new self-knowledge.

There are a number of very good reasons, all of which relate to those human relationships which are the foundation of success in private and working life.

(a) As we have seen, dogmatism is likely to be an expression of an inner feeling of inadequacy and insecurity, which must be realized and balanced if we are to develop the full potential of our personalities.
(b) Prejudice will always stand in the way of wider knowledge and understanding of others and of ourselves.
(c) The self-opinionated man or woman cannot hope for success in living, since he or she must antagonize those who otherwise might regard them with respect and affection.

That is to say, as we have already seen with other character faults, to refuse to try to understand other people's points of view will harm us both in relation to others, and in ourselves. This will apply to business life, to home and married life alike.

v. Am I prepared, having seen the other person's point of view, to give up my own if it was wrong?

Let us suppose that we have tracked down the origins of our chief opinions, so that we now understand the degree to which they are rooted either in prejudice, in emotional reactions to circumstances and events, or to true conviction. (This is, of course, a major assumption. None of us is likely to attain to such a goal completely. Still, by the mere effort we shall have moved some way towards it.)

We know now, for example, that our peculiar bitterness

against social inequalities is largely motivated by our own experience of poverty and injustice. That does not mean that we were wrong to dislike poverty and injustice. We may hold exactly the same view from conviction which we held formerly from prejudice; but now the bitterness will have passed, and our arguments are likely to be reasonable rather than emotional.

Or we may have recognized that until now our views on morality were founded only upon prejudice, without regard to reason. Still, the possibility remains that our views were correct upon reasonable grounds, although the means by which we had arrived at them were the wrong ones. For example, the institution of marriage has been much attacked by people who thought that they had freed themselves from prejudice, and in a new self-righteousness insisted that it was their mission to free others from the 'bonds' of matrimony. Widening psychological knowledge, however, has shown that marriage and the family correspond to basic needs of human character.

To overhaul our 'lumber-room' does not therefore necessarily mean to reject everything in it. It does, however, involve considering upon a new basis the right of each object to be there at all, and to reject or retain it according to an unemotional valuation.

Let us suppose, then, that having reviewed our opinions carefully, one by one, we decide upon reasonable grounds to retain them all. If this is the case, we should first 'check up' on ourselves, for it seems very likely that if we have found nothing at all which needs to be discarded, our judgement is still swayed, even unconsciously, by the very prejudices from whose domination we are seeking to escape.

Yet even should we be such remarkable people that our considered and impartial judgement confirms the opinions gathered throughout the years, our self-examination will not have been without result. It will still be infinitely worth while.

If we hold our opinions solely as the result of prejudice or

if they have been formed in reaction to circumstances and events, it might by miracle so happen that they were all correct; but, by the means through which they had come into being, we should be inclined to hold to them so rigidly and to attach such a degree of emotional feeling to them, as quite to cut us off from understanding of others whose views were different.

Is it, then, you may ask, so very necessary that we should understand others who hold what are, by this illustration, erroneous views? The answer must be 'yes', since the whole of our life must bring us into daily contact and communion with other people. Unless we understand them, realizing that their feelings are similar to our own and their mental processes just as likely as ours to be swayed by emotion, we cannot hope to love, to be loved, or to reach real success in life itself.

It is only when our views are held *impersonally* that we can understand how it comes about that others may hold their views *personally*. In this way we can make allowance for their human error. And since, in fact, if we have been completely honest in our self-examination, we must have found much to jettison, such 'allowances' will not be made in a patronizing but in a truly comradely and understanding way, which will not antagonize others but inspire them with confidence in us.

So far we have proceeded upon the assumption that our views have been confirmed by impartial analysis. Where that has happened, we have a new strength in our convictions, but an unemotional strength which will save us from the error of trying to force our opinions upon others. Yet we cannot any longer delay examination of our position when we have realized, not merely that some dearly-held view was erroneous, but also that a contrary opinion seems to be more desirable.

Plainly, we then owe it to ourselves to adopt a change of view, and only the aggressive vanity and excessive self-esteem which refuse to admit that we could possibly be in error will

stand in our way. Here, again, if we find an emotional barrier to the free admission of the fact that we have been wrong, we must suspect ourselves of an inner feeling of inadequacy and inferiority so strong that it prompts us to 'cover up' by quite irrational insistence that we could not be in error.

Yet when we are 'big' enough to admit mistakes freely, we cannot be at all inferior, courage and breadth of mind being the hallmarks of genuine value.

vi. Am I able to learn from experience, or am I inclined to repeat my mistakes?

This question is related to the two preceding it, because plainly to persevere in making the same errors in action is similar to persevering in clinging to the same errors of thought.

It is the dogmatic person who is least likely to learn from experience. Pig-headedly set upon his own course of action convinced that his own way of living must be utterly right, he does not seek any lessons from experience, which comes to him and passes from him without leaving any constructive impression.

It is the sensible person – who must always be to a very great degree humble and willing to learn – who is able to make use of experience and to apply the lessons it brings. Nor is it enough to make use only of our own personal experience. Certainly, it is a tremendous asset to be able to do so – yet to learn everything by experience is a painful form of education, and one which we can spare ourselves to a great extent if we are willing to learn not only by what happens to ourselves, but also by what has happened to others.

It is said that one cannot learn by the experience of others. That is true, in large measure, chiefly because our imaginations are usually so limited that they prevent our entering fully into other people's experience. Most of us need to suffer in our own bodies or emotions before we become able to *feel with* those who have been in similar situations.

If, however, we make a real effort of imagination to put ourselves into the position of someone else, we shall be guided to understand and to learn by his experience, without need to undergo it in our own persons.

It would obviously be an excellent thing if the heads of nations would apply the lessons of history in their dealings with each other. The pattern of misunderstanding and war might then be broken. Similarly, if young people could be brought to apply the lessons of their elders' experience, they themselves might be spared much needless suffering.

The relationship of parents and children might be extremely fruitful upon this basis, the parents having had experience of many situations which will arise sooner or later in the children's lives.

In practice, of course, it usually happens that children resent very much the efforts of their parents to advise and guide them, and the parents become disheartened and are usually bitterly hurt because their children flout the advice and guidance which they try to give. The reason for this is surely the failure in most families to apply in dealings with near relations the elementary tact which is used in dealing with strangers.

Let parents who feel that their children flout their advice ask themselves frankly whether they have used the most diplomatic means of giving it. Many of those who are now parents grew up in bitter resentment of their own parents' rather heavy-handed ways, and vowed that when they themselves had children they would not make the same mistakes. Yet, now the time has come, many of them are in fact making identical errors – issuing orders, prohibitions and vetoes instead of using reason and tact in the guidance of their own children.

The children, of course, are aggravating. *Of course* they are. Things which are plain to the parents are not plain to them, and with the downrightness of youth they say so, bluntly, adding still more to the division inside the family.

Imagination *on both sides* is needed – from the parents, to think themselves back into youth; and from the children, to think themselves forward into parenthood. The greater responsibility rests with the parents, because they have experienced youth and should with an effort be able to recapture it, while only with their aid can the children be expected to realize all that is involved in parenthood.

It should be a consoling factor to the child who feels that his parents are dictatorial, if he will imagine himself forward to the time when he himself will have the heavy responsibility of trying to guard children from the more bitter experiences of life. It should be a consoling factor to the parent who has had bitter experiences to realize that with tact he can do much to shield his child from such blows. It is no small part of his task to give his advice in a form which the younger person can accept, by carefully showing real dangers instead of making apparently prejudiced prohibitions.

So, if we are wise, we shall try to learn from the experience of others. It will save us much unnecessary trouble. We shall try also to learn from our own experience, not bewailing what has happened to us, but trying to see deeply into the causes of every setback so that we may avoid similar errors in future.

You may say that it is very difficult to learn from experience, because what you have done is the natural consequence of what you are, and the 'what-you-are' is very largely the product of basic temperament, and hereditary and environmental factors. That is true, but it is never too late to try to use our native intelligence to transform our temperament, and modify the effects of heredity and environment upon us, where they may be hampering our development.

It is not an easy task, nor an aim which can be swiftly achieved, but with courage and persistence it can be attempted and to a very great degree accomplished. There are those whose heredity and early environment are so unfortunate that nothing can be done for them. It is not with such

people that we are dealing, but with *you* – and unless you acknowledge yourself to be in this class of unfortunates, you have no excuse for not making the attempt to penetrate to the causes of your mistakes, and then to amend whatever it is in yourself which causes them to be repeated.

It is altogether too easy to say that heredity and environment have made us what we are and to rest upon that. It is not only too easy – in the majority of cases it is not even true. There is such a thing as personal responsibility for our own actions, unless we have already permitted ourselves to become so much the slaves of hereditary and environmental factors as to have surrendered our own will. Such are the criminals and the morally sick. Are we going to number ourselves with them by pleading that we cannot change our nature?

If we are always quarrelling at home, if we cannot get on with people with whom we work, if in our personal lives we find ourselves landing again and again into similar situations with always similar unhappy results – we must make a special personal stock-taking.

Everyone else cannot be wrong all the time. In all probability there is something in ourselves which brings us so often into these same situations.

We are refusing to allow ourselves to learn from experience, and we must find the reason. Of course, we shall have to use great self-discipline, We are likely to find that our inner selves will play tricks with us, putting up all kinds of excuses and defences so that we may not at the first time of thinking be able to discover what is really the matter. But we must not be put off by the wily unconscious self. We must insist on discovering where it is we go wrong, and what twisted trait it is in ourselves which deflects us from the path of happiness and success.

Those who can never break through the strong defences of their unconscious are the people who need the psychiatrist's help, because they have gone on for too long deceiving themselves. Need you admit yourself one of them? If you

must, of course, there is no shame in doing so, any more than in admitting that you are suffering from any other type of illness. The only difference is that this is emotional instead of physical sickness. But why not make the attempt of self-understanding?

Find the cause of your repeated errors. Then use your will-power to amend whatever is wrong in yourself. That is what is meant by learning from experience.

Chapter 10

*

THE SUM OF YOUR 'PERSONAL ASSESSMENT' – III

vii. If thwarted, do I flare up, sulk, or make the best of things?

UNTIL we have learned the difficult art of self-understanding, our instinctive reaction in any crisis, large or small, will be governed by our natural temperament, as modified by hereditary and environmental factors. That is to say, in general, we shall react primitively.

One of the strongest of our instincts, sprung from animal self-preservation, is self-assertion, aggression, and this is one which our life-experience may tend to strengthen, in whatever form it may later manifest itself.

Thus: the child whose natural aggression is strong may, as he grows, come to resent very strongly the parental control and 'interference', the reasons for which he does not fully understand. We are all usually anxious to stand on our own feet much earlier than we are really capable of doing – because we do not fully understand what it is we have to face.

The father who forbids his young daughter to stay out to a late hour knows very well the meaning of the dangers from which he wishes to protect her. If his wish is expressed as a harsh command, she is likely to rebel. Only an appeal to her to put herself into her father's position will make her understand that reason is on his side. Because parents who will express their wishes in this way are rare, there are only too many young people to-day who have grown up with a 'revolt reaction' which shows itself whenever their will is crossed. This is all the more likely because to most young people the very fact of revolt against authority has the appeal of

adventure. Just as the Devil has been said to have 'all the best tunes', so also, only too often, he has all the glamour – which the wise parent will take away from him.

Now while some young people will react to thwarting by revolt, there are others in whom rebellion takes another form than open violence. They will retreat into themselves, harbour grudges, and, in a word, sulk. Their passive opposition is only another form of the revolution-pattern.

Such young people, of both kinds, will carry on their tendencies to revolt or to hidden opposition from youth into their adult life. When they are unable to get what they want, they will explode in rage or retreat into sulks. In either case, their personal and their business life will suffer, and they themselves will be in the end the chief losers.

These are infantile reactions, symptoms of arrested emotional development. Upon this basis, there are a very large number of grown-ups who have never grown up at all.

Perhaps your tempers or sulks do not seem very important to you. Look back, and think hard. Are you sure that they have not cost you friends you could have loved, jobs in which you could have made good? Perhaps most important of all, they are proof to any wise person that you are unable to accept life as it really is, but live in a dream world in which your own wishes and interests are paramount.

We are each part of a much bigger whole – part of the family, part of the working unit, part of the nation, part of the world and part of the human race. Obviously, then, the world was not made for our own small personal benefit, but only for such benefit as we deserve in relation to the bigger things of which we are part.

If we are 'flarers' or 'sulkers', it is time we began to see things in proportion. Perhaps it was a seemingly harsh parent or guardian who planted in us the seeds of open or silent revolt. Well, what of it? That parent or guardian was a human being, liable to error. Perhaps he erred. Perhaps we did. Most likely, both did. But we are not children any

longer, and when we realize this, there is no need for us any longer to be bound by the chains of unfortunate youthful experience. We must cast it off, and make up our minds that the next time our will is crossed we shall try to exercise sufficient control not to act upon the flare-or-sulk pattern which we should have put off with our childish clothes.

Life is entirely a matter of give and take. None of us can always have his own way. Sometimes we may honestly feel that in a certain matter we have a right to it – well, even then, it will often be the more gracious not to insist on it. Such graciousness often brings a greater long-term reward in respect and affection.

To 'make the best of things' when our will is thwarted is the sign of the emotionally mature. Then why go on showing so plainly to those around you that you are still in the baby-stage?

viii. Am I able to carry on even after temporary set-backs?

There is one great quality without which we cannot hope to achieve anything – that is persistence. No real family life, no enduring marriage and no business success can be achieved without the courage which goes doggedly on, even after many seeming defeats.

There come to most of us moments when, in one sphere or other, we feel tempted to 'throw up the sponge', or to take some easy line which will relieve us of pressure without advancing us at all in what we wish to achieve. Those who succeed are the people who, when all seems blackest, still manage to struggle along.

There is one last way of keeping a failing courage. That is to remember that nothing except death is final – perhaps not even that. However great the disaster, it is not the end. That is the great, the marvellous, thing about life. It is like a serial story, in which there may always be something stirring in the next instalment.

Think back to the times of your greatest sorrow. If enough time has gone by for your life to have picked up again, you

have found for yourself what wonderful moments you have had since then, which were worth going on for. Many a young person has felt that life was not worth living after a broken love-affair, only to discover a few years later that happiness was waiting, after all. Many a man has been quite broken in business, only to find after a time that a chance came his way from which he could build up again a position as good as before.

To make a new life requires confidence, perseverance and perhaps luck, but the luck usually follows the confidence and perseverance and eludes those who lack them.

Many, many people have suffered terrible distress at the loss of someone they loved, to find later on that new love was raised up for them. Many others, especially in the dark days which have recently passed across Europe, have lost all they possessed, but with amazing courage have made new lives for themselves, sometimes far from the familiar surroundings in which their past lives were led. An actress who is now a waitress with a smile and a word for every customer . . . a writer who has twice had to learn to work in a new language. . . A mother whose child was killed in the blitz, and who cares for other children in a day-nursery. . . . Such stories should help to inspire us all to overcome the setbacks of daily life, not only in great tragedy but in small – for it is strange how often those who shine in real difficulty allow themselves to be greatly downcast by the smaller troubles of life.

Our setbacks can have two aspects: communal and individual. Perhaps those who are strong in overcoming the individual, personal setback fail in the smaller things because of their communal character – because of the feeling that others know of their little failures and shortcomings.

A man may face personal trouble most bravely, yet be disproportionately upset by some small setback at work or in communal life, which has perhaps come about through some error on his part. If there has been error, why not accept the fact gracefully, even though everyone round us does know

about it? We are not by any means the first to make a mistake, of whatever character, and will not be the last. In fact, none of those round us, of whose opinion we are so much afraid, is without error, and if they have any sense they know it very well. Therefore, a 'communal' setback should be no worse then a 'personal' one. In each case, persistence can carry us forward to some new success.

Perhaps we feel that persistence demands, in some circumstances, a strength of character beyond us. Our personal tragedy is too big. Our sense of communal failure is too bitter. But strength of character is not merely a personal gift from the gods. What passes only too often for strength of character in that sense is mere aggression. True strength of character is far more likely to be the cultivated product of long interior struggle, in which triumph is reached – as in so many things – through repeated failures and even more often repeated attempts.

If we are training for a sporting event, we do not give up at the first failure to hit the target. In fact, we are most unlikely to hit any target at the first time of trying. Life is like that. Provided the target is not impossible to attain, there is nothing to do but to keep on aiming at it, until from repeated failures at last we snatch victory.

We all assume in the most matter-of-fact way possible that the mutilated soldier shall accept his wooden leg or artificial hand. He uses the alien limb smoothly and admirably, and we who are fortunate enough to be whole seldom think for a moment that things should be otherwise. Yet months, if not years, of sheer dogged grit have gone into his skill – and hundred on hundred of failures have passed which at the time must have made him feel that he might as well throw up the attempt then and there. Yet, in face of such example, we still most of us tend to be discouraged by our every small failure.

Nature intends us to be adaptable to circumstances. Our bodies are designed in the most wonderful way, so that few

organs are indispensable. If we lose one lung, the other will carry on with the vital work of feeding our bloodstream with oxygen. If one kidney goes wrong, the other is spurred on to take over the whole work which the kidneys do in keeping the bloodstream pure. Setbacks of any kind, physical, mental or emotional, can be used if we are brave enough to spur us on to greater effort.

Perhaps we feel inadequate to face our problems? That should not make us despair. Every human being, in the bottom of his heart, has a deep feeling of inadequacy and insufficiency – yes, even those whose seeming self-confidence makes us admire them, and feel even smaller by comparison. In fact, the blustering ones feel just as badly as we do, but are bluffing in order to cover it up.

The sense of inadequacy is just one of Nature's devices to keep us on the march. Without its spur, we should be likely, both individually and as a race, to remain static and make no progress at all. If you can understand it in this sense, and use it in this sense, you will be able to convert it from a bar to your progress into the means by which you grow upward to ever higher things.

ix. Can I recognize without envy that others are superior to myself in certain branches of knowledge or activity?

This question appears, at first glance, to be a very simple one. Indeed, you may wonder how it comes to be asked at all, for, you may say, the very fact that there are people outstanding in branches of knowledge and action which are closed to you, forces you to accept the position. You know that you are not Einstein or Brangwyn.

That, however, is not the comparison. We must plainly accept the superiority of masters of the sciences and arts. Can we, as simply and with as little rancour, accept the lesser superiority of colleagues in our own line of work or study?

The question has become a serious one for us all, because of the growing acceptance of what were once called 'egalitarian' ideas. It is, that is to say, becoming more and more

generally accepted that men are born free and equal. We no longer tend to believe that birth into one stratum of society necessarily confers upon the individual a special quality of superiority. On the whole, this levelling of mankind to judgement upon individual attainments rather than upon class claims is an excellent thing.

It is, in fact, a very wonderful thing that our ideas have progressed so far in the right direction in the last hundred years. Mankind's history so far is short, long as it may seem when judged by the life-span of the individual. To have cast off the shackles of inherited prejudice to the extent that we, in modern society, have done, is a very real progress.

It does, however, hold a certain danger – the danger that masses originating in the formerly oppressed classes will react so strongly in their new-found freedom as to overlook the fact that perfect 'equality' between man and man cannot exist.

It is very natural that even to-day very many people who have had to struggle up from undesirable conditions should have been left with the mark of envy and jealousy of those whose opportunities were greater than their own. The fact remains, however, that Nature herself has decreed that some shall be born superior in physical strength and some in mental strength, and that talent shall be given to some and not to others.

There are natural inequalities, which no ideal social system could or should attempt to iron out. The greatest equality for which we should hope and work is equality of opportunity, in order that everyone may be given the fullest means for the development of his own gifts.

We have, after all, different heredities and different environments. No two children, even of the same parents, can be said to have identical heredities and environments, since the constitution and environment of every human egg and sperm must differ, and each human embryo from the moment of conception starts upon its own quite separate record of

experience. We are, therefore, bound to differ from each other, weak in some things and strong in others. When we realize that we have our own special strengths, it should not be difficult to accept our own special limitations.

Of recent years there has been an increasing tendency to pay undue homage to intellectual gifts. There are also, of course, some circles in which gifts of physical strength are especially admired and rewarded. Where either of these attitudes exists to the degree that intellectual or physical prowess is exalted above everything else, the only result has been an unbalance in the individuals concerned.

Where intellectuality is worshipped, the mentally gifted child is encouraged to neglect the proper balance between body, mind and spirit, cutting himself off from his fellow-men and stunting important spheres of his personal development, by concentration upon the things of the mind alone. A child not greatly gifted, but reared in such an atmosphere, is also bound to suffer by being made to feel excessively conscious of his inadequacy.

Conversely, the physically well-endowed may be led by over-praise to neglect to develop those mental and spiritual resources necessary for inner contentment. The physically weak, reared in such an atmosphere, will almost certainly react with a feeling of inferiority which will drive him in upon himself.

Mind cannot, however, exist without body. Nor is body of any significance without mind. We can go too far in applauding the specialist, and neglect Nature's wholesome lesson that different parts are necessary to the healthy whole. Just as the body is in best condition when each of its organs fulfils its own work in co-operation with the rest, so also is the body politic – human society – in best condition when each individual does his own work in co-operation with the others.

No one of us should be regarded as intrinsically superior to his fellows, nor should anyone be denied opportunity for the

full development of his particular powers. On the other hand, it would be foolish to insist upon a theory of equality which caused us to deny the superiority of others to ourselves in certain things in which they are especially gifted.

Just as each of the cells within the body is specially adapted to the work it has to do, so there are born into our human society men and women of every shade of mental and physical endowment, adapted to the work which awaits them. To a very great extent, in the past, owing to the restriction of opportunity to certain classes, much of our best talent has been wasted, or has never found its right place. If, however, we can reach the stage where each human being shall naturally 'find his own level', we shall at last have an organic society in which all talents are used, for the benefit of the individual and of mankind itself.

Nor does the use of this word 'talent' imply the kind of outstanding specialist gift which to-day we tend to over-emphasize. Good health is a 'talent', so is good average mental capacity, mechanical ability, and most women's natural power to create a happy home in reasonable conditions. If we have any one of these things, we have a gift which should be fostered, though not in such degree that we neglect the all-round balance of our ability.

It may well be that through the endless ages yet ahead, new types of human beings may be evolved. It could come about that changing conditions of life on this earth caused the gradual development of new kinds of men, with new kinds of powers, the old powers needed for survival in half-barbaric conditions being shed. This we cannot know. Meanwhile we must accept our world as it is, and in our present world there is work for all to do, wherever their personal talent may lie.

Half the cause of those envies and jealousies which cause our inability to accept the superiority of others in certain things is that feeling of inadequacy and inferiority which, as we have seen, should be allowed to work in us only to the degree that it may spur us on.

If we have allowed initial setbacks to foster in us rancour and envy, we are encouraging within ourselves the very sentiments which will most surely hamper our own development upon those lines in which we can be most useful to others and to ourselves. Rancour and envy, in fact, are an admission that we no longer have confidence in our own ability upon *any* level.

The mathematician may admire the painter. He will not envy him, so long as he has confidence in his own ability in his own particular line. Nor will he, because he cannot become a master, give up his own private hobby of daubing on canvas, though he may frankly have to laugh at the result. The man who, with boastful expansiveness, tells those around him that he could have become Prime Minister if he had put his mind to it is, in fact, proclaiming not merely that he could never have become Prime Minister, but that he has no real belief in himself at all. For if he were even a really good cabinet-maker, his creative instinct and his self-esteem would be sufficiently content with that.

If, therefore, we find ourselves, on careful examination, unable to recognize without envy that others are superior in certain branches of knowledge and activity, it is time we set out to discover the origin of this rancorous spirit. It may lie in hurts to our self-esteem in the past, when we were made to feel inadequate compared with someone else.

What we must do now is take careful stock of such gifts as we have, and discover whether we are making best use of them. We may find that there is no longer *need* – so to speak – for rancour and envy, because we have made a fair success of our own lives and work, but have somehow forgotten to drop overboard on the way the childish reaction of our hurt pride in the past. We may find, of course, that we have not yet put our gifts to their best use, but have wasted our time and temper in envying others while neglecting to put our own lives in order. Then it is up to us to change our way of living in accordance with our findings.

Always suspect the impulse of envy, even where you may feel that it is justified by the facts. A little will not do harm, if it acts as a spur to reasonable success. Like a small drop of strychnine in medicine, it may act as a stimulant. *In large doses it kills.*

We all know the perpetual 'grouser' and envier. He is disliked by others, because he dislikes them. He will not succeed, because from the start he expects to fail.

Have confidence in your own particular strength – however small it may seem – and everything else will come. People will recognize the absence of envy in you, and honour it. Your strong self-respect will in itself bring new opportunities.

x. *Can I, recognizing my own limitations, continue to work steadfastly for the best use of my personal talents?*

Let us imagine that we have succeeded in isolating the causes of such envy of others as may have existed in us. We recognize that in our own interests such petty jealousies must be put aside, and on careful thought we find that whatever our limitations we certainly have some particular strength. It may be quickness at figures, a methodical mind, quick and clever fingers, or some other such small gift.

Now, in getting so far, we have gone a long way – far more so than we may think. We can begin to make the best of ourselves only when we learn our own limitations. The next thing is really to know them, and to accept them. For even when we have gone so far as to recognize what our limitations are, it is still extremely difficult to get ourselves really to accept them and to act in the knowledge of their existence. However good our intentions, still we slide back. Yet to make the best use of what gifts we have, we must *steadfastly* – that is the important word in this question – continue to persevere.

It may therefore be useful to realize what it is in our nature which makes this perseverance so difficult. It is, in fact, our

own best ideals, which, if not understood, can become as much a nuisance to us as our bad impulses.

Throughout our lives, perhaps from the very moment of birth, we build up a picture of ourselves as we should like to be – very, very much greater and more important than we really are, either in ourselves or in relation to the world around us. This is not an unnatural assumption, at the beginning of our lives, since most of us – except the very unfortunate – are the centre of attention and loving care, which quickly gives us the impression of being also the centre of the world. Every little achievement of our babyhood is praised to the skies. Little errors of childhood seem important out of all proportion to their true significance.

The world presents itself to most of us, therefore, at the beginning, as something which exists for our personal benefit, in which other people serve us, in which we ourselves are entitled to every kind of praise and admiration. As we begin to perceive that these first two things are not so, still we cling to the third. Indeed, one might almost say that the more we are made to realize that the earth and those in it do not exist for our service, the more strongly we tend to desire praise and admiration, because these become even more necessary in order to reinforce the diminishing feeling of personal importance.

Our ideal of what we should be very early becomes fixed in our minds. We may identify it with our father or mother, or with some other adult who seems to personify strength or wisdom. Our child-mind paints this ideal in such glowing colours as could not exist on this earth. That is the danger for those parents who foster in their children the idea that they themselves are all-wise and quite superhuman. The children's revulsion when later on they discover their parents to be human beings liable to error is likely to be very strong – a catastrophe which could have been avoided if a human relationship had been begun from the start.

We have all, then, a 'super-ego', or 'ego-ideal' – ourselves

as we should like to be, and as which we secretly see ourselves in childish daydreams. Most of us, as we grow, put away the fancies in which we do daring deeds, rescue neighbours from burning houses and snatch other children from beneath bolting horses. Yet we retain the heroic conception of ourselves in some form or other, however ashamed we may be to admit it.

Such an ego-ideal can be a spur. It should, in fact, remain an ideal, recognized as such, recognized as something to which we are striving, which we may never reach, and which will certainly never be even approached without repeated failure on the way.

Our danger is that we shall not regard it as an ideal, but as something already existent – even although on the conscious level we know that it is nothing of the kind. This is the real and potent enemy to any kind of advance: that although our conscious mind may recognize our limitations, still unconsciously we go on believing ourselves to be already the super-being of our desires. Strong inferiority feeling is only the inverse – the opposite which is, in fact, the same thing – of this unconscious assumption.

In order to persevere steadfastly in the development of our real talents, after recognition of our limitations, we must frankly face the fact that our vision of ourselves as super-beings is an ideal, and an ideal only. It is one which we share with every other human being, as all our basic feelings and impulses are shared.

The vain criminal reading the newspaper-reports of his crimes while in prison is only feeding his warped conception of himself as the most important person in the world. He is still the self-centred child with whose development something went wrong. The force and cunning which went into his exploits might, but for that warping, have brought forth a good harvest for himself and for society. He still has his ego-ideal, even if it has become twisted from one kind of hero to another.

When you have faced the fact of your limitations, and accepted them; when you have determined to make best use of such gifts and opportunities as you have; then you can reach the added strength of perseverance by recognizing that your glorified self-vision is an ideal which may be impossible, and which can only be neared through repeated failures, but – and this is most significant – which will never be even neared unless you have courage to dare those failures on the way, and to go on again after each one.

Chapter 11

*

THE SUM OF YOUR 'PERSONAL ASSESSMENT' – IV

xi. Can I accept responsibility without too much self-doubt, and without over-reaching myself?

OUR modern methods of industrial and social organization are sometimes criticized upon the ground that they tend to take away opportunities for the development of a sense of personal responsibility. Yet it is not without significance that a recent public opinion test showed that almost fifty per cent of the people would prefer to have a business of their own rather than to be employed.

With our public life tending more and more towards centralization, both in industry and in government, it does happen that many thousands find themselves in a position where no great responsibility is reposed in them – or where, at any rate, this seems at first sight to be the case.

Yet that is seldom quite true. Whatever work we may have to do, it is possible to do it badly or to do it well. If we do our daily work only with an eye to the week-end's wage-packet, then if our labour is monotonous, or consists of one small process of which we do not see the end result, we are likely to drift into the habit of forgetting that, in fact, we have a responsibility both to do our small part well, and to try for our own sakes to progress to some wider sphere of action. The fact remains, however, that there is no work so menial or so routine that it does not contribute an essential part to some greater design.

Most of us, too, find quite early that there are many other

kinds of responsibility in life than business responsibilities. Each of us has a certain duty inherent in the mere fact of being part of a family and part of the community. As we become adult we find our relationships with other people involving us in still wider responsibilities.

Where our emotional growth has progressed along with our physical and intellectual growth, these widening responsibilities come to us naturally and do not catch us unaware. It does, however, frequently happen that an individual's development has been upset through early experience, so that he finds himself either unable to face responsibilities as they come along, or too prone to accept responsibilities which do not properly belong to him.

In the first case, if this applies to ourselves, it is likely that at some time in the past our self-confidence has been undermined, perhaps only in some trivial way which has none the less left a deep impression which we find it difficult to erase. This can usually be found to be the case with those people who, with the best intentions not to evade their natural duties, are none the less always finding that in practice they land themselves into situations from which they have to run away again because they cannot face up to the difficulties involved.

This may happen in working life, where someone finds himself continually shrinking from responsibility, with the result that he closes to himself all hope of advancement. It can also happen in our personal lives, so that we fail those we love best. Unless we are content to go on like this, plainly there must be some attempt to call a halt to this pattern of failure and make a determined effort to discover why we have not so far been able to escape from it.

Careful thought may convince us that the reason lies in the fact that at some time in the past our self-confidence has been undermined. This may have come about through some quite petty incident in childhood, or through a combination of circumstances which early impressed us with the idea that,

compared with others, we were lacking in one respect or another.

The first thing for us to realize, in such a case, is that we are placing too great an emphasis upon our own importance in the world.

Does this seem to you to contradict the suggestion that what we are suffering from is a deep sense of inadequacy? In fact, it does not. By continuing to think it so very important that at some time or other we have failed, or imagined ourselves to have failed, by comparison with others, is to overemphasize our own importance in the scheme of things.

If we truly realize that we are only one of countless millions, we can begin to understand that our little failures in the past do not, as we incline to think, stand out noticeably among all the other little human failures. The beginning of self-confidence comes when we stop assuming that no-one else was ever in difficulties like our own, or was ever found wanting in ways similar to ourselves.

It is not, after all, likely that we alone of all humankind have been singled out for a special weakness and incompetence. It must be that whatever our shortcomings, we have compensating strengths, if we will only take care to develop them.

We may not be intellectually brilliant. What of that? Our level of intelligence is shared by millions of others. Yet there may very well be something in us which is of greater import than mere intellectuality. To be a 'great brain' without also being a real human being is to be a menace to oneself and to others.

We may not be physically strong or attractive. Again, our disability is shared by innumerable other human beings – many, indeed, are in much worse case. It would be a strange world which was made up only of athletes and professional beauties.

So far we have dealt only with those who find themselves afraid to accept responsibility. What has been said of them

applies equally to those who seem at first sight to be their opposite – those who are always rushing ahead to shoulder responsibilities which do not belong to them, or which are, in fact, beyond their real strength, the people who 'bite off more than they can chew'. They, too, are over-estimating their importance in the world, though in the opposite way, and for much the same reasons, though different reactions have brought about different results.

Over-confidence, like under-confidence, results from our normal human desire to be looked up to and told how clever we are. That sense of inadequacy implanted in us by Nature in order to act as a spur only too often gets warped in one way or the other as we grow up from childhood. If we are introverted, the effect of an early setback may turn us back into ourselves because our desire to be looked up to has been thwarted. If we are extroverted, a parallel setback might cause us to show the more aggressive reaction of 'overdoing' our efforts to secure admiration.

We have all one plain duty to ourselves, which must be fulfilled before we can even start to think of our duty to others. That is to get our conception of our place in the world into a proper proportion, realizing that we are on the whole neither better nor worse, nor more or less clever than the great majority of people. Very rare indeed are those who stand head and shoulders above the mass, and, conversely, those far below it.

Those who seem born 'irresponsible' or 'over-responsible' are equally unbalanced, demonstrating to those with eyes to see and wisdom to understand that they cannot face the facts of ordinary life and work – not because they have not the ability, but simply because they are still at the mercy of their 'instinctive' reactions, which they have not learned to control.

If we find ourselves in either of these two classes of people, now is the time to try to assess our place in the world in its right proportion.

We may be sure that we have sufficient ability to make a

happy and useful life according to our own special abilities, wherever thay may lie. If we have a great feeling of inadequacy, we must realize that it is shared by everyone around us, however successfully they may hide it. If we have too great an opinion of ourselves, and feel ourselves to be wasted, we should set ourselves a reasonable goal in life and work towards that.

In either case, the first step must be to give up the escape of despondency or dreams, and face real life. To stop thinking about yourself, when you have realized that, will be a big step forward.

xii. Do I tend to 'yearn for the moon'?

If we have truly considered our answers to the two preceding questions, we shall have been led on the way to recognize whether or not we have a tendency to waste in useless longings the time and energy which might be spent in reaching some practical gain.

It is the person without real confidence in himself – whether this is revealed as a plain lack of self-confidence or as its inverse, over-confidence – who continues long after childhood is past to feed his inner sense of inadequacy with unreal longings and dreams.

It is perfectly natural to the child to indulge in private fantasies of riches, high birth, nobility, and heroism. It is as unnatural to the adult to do so as to play with a rattle. It is just one more confession of that feeling of inadequacy which, kept in true proportion, can be so useful a spur to achievement, but which can poison all endeavour if it is allowed to become an obsession.

Part of the trouble, of course, is caused by the false values instilled into many of our young people at home, at school, and, above all, in the 'civilized' world in which we live to-day. In our present state of moral chaos, it is not surprising that impressionable boys and girls gain the idea that luxury, cheap fame, and power through force or sex are the desirable ends to be sought in life.

So it comes about that many people despise their small but solid possessions and opportunities, in hankering after luxury they will never attain. The lure of publicity haunts others, who dream of their magnified faces smiling from poster-hoardings, or their names flaunting across the newspaper-headlines. Husbands and wives may be caused to despise the real worth of their own partners, through having absorbed to too great a degree the idea of synthetic 'romance'.

All idealism is good. A humdrum slackness which makes no attempt to gain fuller experience or satisfaction, or to develop physical, mental and spiritual gifts to the best degree, results in merely vegetable existence. This is, however, quite another thing – the excess in the opposite direction which will be equally harmful to our own best interests.

Daydreams hurt no-one provided that they are not carried to excess, to sap away the strength and concentration which should go into the ordinary things of our daily life. We need, perhaps, a return to some of the older values of the world, to the Christian conception of work as a contribution to the human community and as an offering to God, sanctifying our labour however trivial it may seem to be.

If you tend to yearn for the moon, why not try to content yourself with admiring it where it is? Your own home-made lamp, well looked after, is probably much more fitted to your real needs.

xiii. Have I a reasonable, practical ambition; an 'impossible' ambition; or none at all?

Well, what is the result of asking ourselves this question, to which we come so naturally from those which have gone before? Upon this, the summing-up of our inner life, depends so very much of our hope of happiness and reasonable success.

It is hardly possible that we have no ambition at all, even if what we want from life hardly seems to come under that heading. Yet whatever it is which to us constitutes fulfilment is in fact our aim, whether it be to make some worth-while

contribution to the arts or sciences, to run our own business, or to be the centre of a happy home.

If we do not yet know exactly what our aim should be, the best way to find out is by reaching a clear understanding of our true capabilities, by a full consideration of our 'personal assessment'.

The reasonable, practical ambition will be one related to our natural powers, and one which it is possible to gain if we take care to develop those powers to the fullest degree consistent with all-round development of all our human qualities. The 'impossible' ambition is the 'yearning for the moon' dream-ideal, which can only be a hindrance, not a help, in our attempt to gain the fullest possible measure of content.

It may be that we have so far set ourselves too high a goal, bending every effort towards a degree of success which, having regard to our circumstances, would require us to be superhuman in order to achieve it. In such a case as this, disappointment must almost inevitably be the result.

When the goal remains for ever out of reach, there will always be a feeling of failure which spoils genuine appreciation of the very real good which has been gained. When, in such cases, the goal is attained, it is likely to be only at the expense of real contentment – as in the case of the too-successful business man who mints even his own heart into gold, losing on the way all true human contact.

Every one of us can, with some little effort, *create* something worth-while. Strangely enough, some of the highest forms of 'creation' open to mankind are those least regarded. There could, for instance, be no greater real achievement than to give to the world a child or children whose education and upbringing had fitted them to contribute their utmost to the total sum of human wellbeing. The parents who live the quietest, least regarded lives, with fewest illusions about their relative importance in the world, and who pass on unhonoured and unsung, may well have had and fulfilled the proudest yet most practical ambition there can be. It is

certain that they will also have reaped the richest real reward.

Ambition should be founded upon the practical basis of your natural gifts, plus that small percentage of unattainability which will both give you opportunity for development in gaining them, and justify you in a proper pride in your achievement when at last it is within your grasp.

xiv. Am I truly considerate towards those who have to live and work with me, recognizing their feelings to be as important as my own?

Perhaps we may at this point begin to feel that as a result of our self-questioning, we understand a little more clearly the workings of our own minds and hearts. If that is so, than one result must surely be that we shall also find it very much easier to understand those of others.

Though each of us is individual, yet we all share a common nature. Each of our bodies is equally liable to be burnt by fire or drowned by water. Each heart and mind is equally liable to be warped, in one way or another, by disappointment, humiliation and sorrow. Sometimes we forget this, and are genuinely surprised that our thoughtless words and deeds affect others so strongly as they do. That is because, in our self-centredness, we cannot fully enter into other people's experience, or ever completely appreciate what their lives have been.

It usually requires conscious effort on our part to make for other people those 'allowances' which we grant so freely to ourselves. If *we* are irritable and difficult, we are ready enough with excuses, yet we habitually demand from those around us a level of good humour to which we ourselves do not always attain.

It is true that those of us who try to maintain certain standards of behaviour in our own lives are sometimes disappointed by what we feel to be a lack of response from others. That is, of course, bound to happen from time to

time – but, when it does, do we always look very far to find out why in such a case it has happened? We are usually too hurt or angry for that.

This is not meant to imply that we are always to accept bad behaviour from others, and meekly to give the selfish their own way. That will be as bad for them as for everyone around them. Withholding judgement so long as it is possible, because of our own special liability to error, we may still feel in certain cases that it is necessary, from all points of view, to point out or even to punish a fault. We shall do so much more effectively if we are able, by putting ourselves in the position of the other person (which requires a great effort of imagination and understanding), to realize the causes of his conduct.

Often we may find that we have ourselves helped to bring about an unhappy situation, because we have failed to keep the atmosphere sweet by due consideration for the person concerned. If that is so, we have to acknowledge how far we ourselves have been wrong, before anything can be done to put things right.

It is not a sign of strength to go through life expecting to get, or insisting on getting, one's own way. It is a sign rather of weakness and of a small mind, for the large mind will early have grasped the fact that our personal existence is only a part of the life of society.

In everything we think and do and say, we cannot avoid setting up reactions which will influence everyone else with whom we come into contact. That is, if you think about it, a pretty big responsibility.

Some very sincere and honest people, for instance, make the lives of others quite miserable because of the way in which they insist upon sticking to 'principles'. Sometimes these 'principles' are quite petty rules, which they try to force upon others. Now although there is no reason at all why, if we are convinced that something is right, we should permit ourselves to be prevented from saying so, or from acting

accordingly – the fact remains that we have no right to try to impose this idea upon others, who may not be so convinced. No 'principle' can be a really valid excuse for unkindness or disregard for others' feelings.

Even truth may be relative, for unkind truths are better suppressed. The 'social lie', spoken or acted, *is* the basis of society, nor is it quite wrong that this should be so. Few of us can bear to face the truth about ourselves, even when we set out in the privacy of our own souls to find it out. Still less can we endure to have it pointed out to us by someone else. Yet we are only too often anxious to face our friends with the naked truth concerning them.

How much better it would be if we could reverse this habit, shielding our friends out of consideration for their human feelings, but cultivating greater honesty with ourselves!

If you are forced, on careful self-examination, to admit that you do not always show that regard for the feelings of others which you would wish shown to you, why not begin now to try to form a habit of 'feeling with' them, and of 'putting yourself in their place'?

There is little to lose by it, except some small selfish pleasure in putting them in the wrong. There is much to be gained – not least, an all-round increase of goodwill.

xv. When necessary, am I prepared to make a personal sacrifice?

The real acid test of all our protestations of goodwill and friendship comes when we have the opportunity to give some concrete expression of them. This does not necessarily mean in a material way, although sometimes it may do so. Rather, it may mean a preparedness to put up with inconvenience, to have treasured plans suddenly changed, or to give up some anticipated pleasure.

Strangely enough, most of us respond very well to the really big crises of life. When dangerous sickness occurs,

when a friend is distraught with personal tragedy, it is rare that we do not put aside private considerations to give what help we can. We do not always do so entirely from the best of motives. Our deep desire to be needed causes us to find satisfaction in the opportunity to be of service, even while we may hate the causes. But that is not in itself a bad thing, nor does it detract from the value of what we do.

Where most of us fail, however, is in the smaller incidents of life. It may then seem rather a strain to be asked to put ourselves out for someone else. Perhaps a neighbour asks us to turn down our radio. How irritating it is! Or to look after a child, on what we have promised ourselves is going to be a quiet and restful afternoon. How much we regret our lost peace! Yet the very degree to which *real* sacrifice is involved does make our helpfulness on such occasions very much more valuable than it seems on the surface.

After all, if a small sacrifice is asked of us, it will usually be because the result for someone else is likely to be bigger to them than the effort we are asked to make. Their appreciation is likely to last longer than our passing inconvenience.

There are, of course, people who deliberately make use of others. It is up to us, with someone like that, to know when to stop – not so much for our own sake, as for theirs, since they must learn that life consists of give-and-take, not of taking only. Such people, however, are in the minority, and quickly become known for what they are. There is no reason why we should get ourselves into difficulties for the perpetual borrower, the perpetual scrounger, who seldom pays back in any sense.

Yet on the whole it is surely better to take the risk of being let down once or twice, rather than refuse help, which may seem quite small, yet which may sweeten someone else's life at a difficult moment.

There are few of us who are not equipped to help other people from time to time in one way or another. There are few of us who do not, at some time in our lives, have need of

help from others. We are all involved with each other, in a true and practical brotherhood, by our common humanity.

It is no sign of strength to boast that we have never taken help from anyone. It can be just as selfish to be super-independent, as to be over-dependent, for in this way we may deprive others of the very real satisfaction of giving us aid in warm friendship. To learn to receive is as essential a lesson as to learn to give, and one which for some spirits is very much harder. Acceptance of help does involve to some people a positive sacrifice of personal pride – for them, that is the sacrifice which they must learn to make.

We all tend to think a lot of ourselves, perhaps as compensation for that inner feeling of our own inadequacy. Well, when personal sacrifice of any kind, large or small, is asked of us, then is the time to show our real estimate of our own valuation. Plainly, the richest of us is the one who can afford most to *give*. If we are rich in health and strength, and in human sympathy, we shall show that best by the degree and the readiness of our giving.

We may tend to be proud of ourselves for being in a position to give help, instead of needing to ask it – though few of us do not at some time need something from others in spiritual or material aid. If we are on the 'giving' side, we should not so much take credit to ourselves as thank God for what we ourselves have been given.

The credit is not ours. Without mental and physical health and opportunity, we could not have got anywhere. Therefore, whatever our illusions, in fact, much has been *given* to us.

Your best thanksgiving for that will be through the continued small sacrifices of self which may mean so much to others.

Chapter 12

*

THE SUM OF YOUR 'PERSONAL ASSESSMENT' – V

xvi. Do I honestly regard men and women as equal but different?

YOU may perhaps have been surprised to find how little reference has so far been made in this book to the fact of sex, and the problems which arise in most of our lives at one time or another in that connexion. Of all our questions, this and the one following are the only ones with a direct bearing upon the subject. Yet successful living certainly involves a knowledge of the implications of sexuality, the acceptance of it, and the reaching of a real balance and harmony in our sexual lives.

It is, however, my opinion that to-day there is too great a tendency to take sex out of its natural context as a part of life, and therefore to over-emphasize it. That is the danger into which we have fallen – a very natural, though undesirable, reaction from the equally harmful 'hush-hush' policy of the last century.

Those rules which hold good in normal day-to-day life should hold good also in sexual life. Sexuality must be accepted, indeed, as a part of day-to-day life – an integral part, not to be thought of either as something unmentionable, or as something to be privately dwelt on out of all proportion.

Public puritanism breeds private libertinism. Public licentiousness is usually a form of protest against former excessive strictness. There may not yet have been a society whose members were individually adjusted to accept sex as a natural thing, and whose public life therefore reflected their private sanity in this respect.

The fundamental for happiness in sexual life is recognition of the fact of sexuality as a natural thing, good and necessary in itself for the continuance and further evolution of the human race – and, more, as the 'stroke of genius on the part of God' which makes possible a far more intimate communion between two human beings than any other kind of relationship can possibly give.

The overwhelming majority of men and women grow up with their outlook upon sex hopelessly warped – 'hopelessly', because usually they do not recognize this fact, and can therefore do nothing about it. That is why this question is put before you in its present form, which is likely, through your immediate reaction, to be a touchstone of your acceptance or otherwise of sexuality as a natural basis of your life.

Consider it now: Do you *honestly* regard men and women as *equal* but *different*? Those are the important words: 'honestly', 'equal but different'?

Many of us pay lip-service to a theoretical equality between man and woman, just because that is the 'modern' thing to do, yet in the deep recesses of our hearts are privately convinced that there is no equality at all between them. Many men are deeply convinced of their own innate superiority. Only too many women also regard the male as superior. Often their hot denials confirm this – for they resent the fact of their womanhood and would, if they could do anything about it, prefer to have been men. Such women often go to the extreme of stressing the 'equality' between the sexes, and denying the 'difference', insisting that they can do anything of which a man is capable.

Yet it is perfectly plain that, in fact, woman has been denied by Nature certain capacities – such as man's superior physical strength – while in her turn being endowed with powers beyond the reach of any man. What, then, is the argument about? Here are two creatures, perfectly adapted to a dual life, making between them a wonderful foundation unit for society, and each bringing a special contribution to

the life of the other, and of mankind. Surely that is in itself a conception far superior to anything which could be built upon our individual male-or-female existence alone?

A strong and reasonably intelligent man has a right to be proud and happy in his opportunity to build a useful and rewarding life, not only for himself but for wife and children too. A strong and reasonably intelligent woman has every reason to be proud and happy in her opportunity to help her man by her special contribution to the family and social life. So very much depends upon her – more than to-day we are likely to admit. She can often make or break her husband's career, according to whether or not she gives encouragement in dark moments and sustains the self-confidence which may fail him in face of setbacks. She can make or break his home happiness – not so much in the extent to which she may or may not romantically love him, but in the degree to which she applies in her married life the normal rules of human conduct. She can also make or break the lives of her own children – in a manner never open to their father – according to whether or not her early training of them is well adapted to the needs of their future.

This is important – how very important, we may see by looking around us at present-day society. We live in a time when it is largely agreed that in theory man and woman are equal, and when public sanctions upon the discussion of sex and of loose sex behaviour have slowly almost ceased to exist. None the less, it is plain that many young people in the twenties and thirties have got their sexual lives into a tangle – almost as if greater freedom in speech and action had brought bad results instead of good.

In fact, I think the time has not yet come for us to judge whether greater public freedom has or has not been productive of good results; the effect of past hypocrisy is still working itself out in the lives of these young people, whose errors seem mostly to be not the result of any viciousness in them or looseness in the society in which they live, but rather

of inadequate training in childhood, which prevented their making proper use of the greater freedoms of to-day.

Primarily, much damage is done by the early impression upon a boy or girl child of the idea of his or her 'superiority' or 'inferiority' through the sheer fact of sex. Little girls are often made to feel of less value than little boys. They may hear their parents openly lament the fact that a boy was not born to them. They will almost certainly be told by a brother or boy-playmate that 'you're only a girl'.

Many grow up as 'masculine protest' women, secretly longing to be men, and quite unable to adapt themselves to become real women. They may turn into soured spinsters. They may become unwilling mothers, unconsciously visiting upon their own children their resentment at having been made mothers at all. They may make failures of their marriages because they are always unconsciously seeking revenge upon men for the wrong they feel to have been done to them. Innumerable tragedies, big and small, spring from this cause.

Conversely, of course, the small boy who is early impressed with his own superiority through the fact of his sex is likely to find difficulty in gaining sexual happiness, because he will be unable to respect the woman he chooses as a partner or grant her right to exist as a human being with her own personal life, will, thoughts and desires.

Both boy and girl children are likely to be deeply affected by that other fatal error in upbringing to which we have already referred elsewhere – the early implanting of the impression that sexuality is something 'dirty' and undesirable, an unfortunate fact, a deplorable lapse in taste on the part of the Creator, and something best not talked or thought about.

Bring up a child like that – and the greater number of people living to-day have, at any rate by implication, been brought up to feel in that way – and then let it loose in a society whose theoretical 'freedoms' are increasing, and the inevitable result will be the miseries we can see around us to-day. Fundamentally, such troubles have probably been

caused not by the new freedom, but by the complete inability of our young people, through faulty early training, to use it constructively.

Out of this situation arises every kind of difficulty. The woman who unconsciously feels a fundamental dislike and distrust of sex will always be an unsatisfactory wife, whose husband may seek elsewhere the complete fulfilment she is unable, without knowing why, to give. As a mother, she may try to 'eat up' the lives of her children; in the case of a son, tending to bind him to her by ties so unnaturally strong that later he in his turn may fail to find happiness with a normal life-partner. As a single woman, she may pursue a 'career', not from real vocation – always a special and separate thing – but to replace the love and fulfilment she dare not find in the sexual life against which her whole mentality has been set.

The effects upon a boy are likely to be equally harmful. Believing sex to be 'dirty', he must resent woman as its vehicle, and in all probability will visit upon women in later life the shame and guilt which he feels in surrendering (against the disgust which has become part of his reactions) to the normal impulses which are necessarily part of his instincts.

Such are, very often, the philanderers, the really bad husbands, and the men whose natural sexual urge becomes deviated from normal forms of expression. Many suffer greatly, and make those women who love them suffer, because they cannot achieve a normally happy sexual life. Some of the latter are even made to suffer by society, it not being yet sufficiently realized to what degree society itself is responsible for their aberrations.

There are few of us who will not recognize in our own lives the effects of wrong training in this direction. Our trouble may be by comparison so small, or we may so well have succeeded in overcoming it, that it sounds absurd to mention it in the same breath as those more radical difficulties which cause broken marriages and public scandals. We ought,

however, to recognize that the difference is not one of kind, but only one of degree. This should enable us to look with more understanding upon the follies of others.

If you recognize in your own life the results of wrong early impressions, which have not yet been overcome, an effort should be made to realize where the root of the trouble lies. Only in this way will it be possible for you to get that balance and harmony in your outlook upon sex which will lead to successful marriage. Neither sex is superior. Each is different from the other, with its own special strength and weaknesses – happily complementary. Nor is sex in itself something to be ashamed of, or which can healthily be ignored. On the contrary, it is, and must be accepted as, the normal basis of human joy and growth, both for the individual and for society.

xvii. Am I fully ready for marriage? or Am I 'pulling my weight' in my marriage?

Marriage is not a question of 'living happily ever after' with a Prince Charming or Charming Princess. It is a long, gradual process of the growth of mutual understanding and mutual aid between two human beings, each with good and bad points. Marriage is the beginning of the book of life, for which childhood and adolescence have been only the introductory preparation – it is not the last but the first chapter.

Marriages seldom fail because of any real vice in either partner. They grow sick because they have been approached in the wrong attitude, and because the rules of normal human conduct have been quite forgotten in the home. This is no 'separate question', unrelated to those other questions we have tried to answer in order to reach our 'personal assessment', for only if we have been able to answer the sixteen questions which have gone before this one with some positively good result can we hope either to regard ourselves as ready for marriage, or, if married, to be a likely success as husband or wife.

Only if we try to understand the other person's point of view, learn from our mistakes, make the best of things, carry on after temporary setbacks – and so on, through all the tiny points we have discussed – doing the many small things which can sweeten ordinary life, only then can we say that we are really fit for marriage – and that fitness must include, necessarily, the same attitude towards the facts of sex which we have just reviewed.

It is quite a tall order.

We must be at least as forbearing with our marriage partner as, say, with our business partner.

We must appreciate the really solid good things our marriage brings, instead of 'yearning for the moon' of infantile romance – and we must show that appreciation.

We must fully realize the human character of our partner, which will include feelings and faults similar to our own.

In addition, we must have a certain amount of really sound practical scientific knowledge, for although the usual reasons for married unhappiness lie (contrary to common belief) elsewhere, yet marriages do often go wrong upon purely technical sex problems.

Fortunately, it does not often now happen that young people go into marriage without knowing and understanding what is involved in the merely physical act – though occasional cases still come to my knowledge. Any husband or wife, of course, who feels him or herself still to be in ignorance, should obtain and study a simple text-book, of which there are many available.* The trouble usually lies in the fact that young people's scraps of knowledge are not correlated; this can quickly and easily be put right.

It is not by any means unusual for a young, inexperienced couple to feel disappointment in their honeymoon. They usually 'give up' too soon – emotionally, if not physically. Each blames the other, secretly, for not having given the expected 'perfect joy', and such resentments may build them-

* e.g. *Love without Fear* (Rich and Cowan) 12s. 6d.

selves cumulatively into an emotional barrier which may ruin the marriage. Young people should realize that even the physical pleasure of marriage is in most cases a 'growing thing', too. Good lovers are more often made than born. The mental attitude must, of course, be free of false shames, and the act be inspired by genuine feeling, if there is to be a satisfactory union; even then, however, it may require time before a couple becomes really adjusted one to the other.

There is very much more to human sexuality than the physical act. That is where people go wrong who base their arguments for promiscuity upon an 'animal' comparison. There can be no such comparison. Human life, as we saw in Part I of this book, is lived upon three different levels – physical, mental and spiritual. Marriage, to be complete, should take place upon all three levels.

If is, of course, possible for physical union to exist upon that plane alone – and to be, on that plane, very enjoyable. But those who live their sexual lives only upon that plane are missing far more than they are willing to believe. They cannot, of course, allow themselves to believe so, since to admit it would be to acknowledge their own incompleteness.

Union which takes place only upon the physical plane omits special satisfactions, given so far as we know only to humankind as the highest peak yet of evolutionary development. Those special satisfactions, of communion upon the mental and spiritual as well as the physical plane, are the reward of enduring marriage. If that sounds high-flown, consider such few very old and completely devoted couples as you may have met – with all the serenity which seems to belong to them as of right.

You will remember our thesis that human life reaches full harmony only when balance is attained. The body needs balance between its organs and members in order to reach a state of full health. The human being needs balance between body, mind and spirit in order to attain to full man- or womanhood. So also marriage needs balance between physical,

mental and spiritual satisfactions in order to attain its highest development. From such marriage, the really happy family can grow, whose children, bred up in an atmosphere of peace, understanding and contentment, will continue into their own lives the balanced outlook needed for their own fullest growth.

It is, after all, with parents that the first and most important responsibility lies – not only for their own lives and their joint living, but for the lives their children may lead later. This may sound a hard saying – and it seems especially hard when we consider the self-sacrificing and well-intentioned parents whose children disappoint them, or at least seem to live according to a different standard from their own. It is, however, only too often those good parents' sins of omission which bear fruit in their children's later lives. It is not enough to train a child in honesty, industry and good citizenship, without preparing him or her for the later roles of husband or wife, father or mother.

Training for marriage and parenthood should begin very early – almost ridiculously early. From the first years, there should be frankness and matter-of-factness in the home regarding all physical facts, and honesty in answering childish questions in terms within the child's understanding.

There should be no hint of a suggestion that a boy-child is superior, or a girl-child inferior, the differing aptitudes and qualities of both being accepted by implication.

Sexuality should be spoken of as natural and right, when such discussion is relevant; without it ever being made the subject of special and private 'talks', which leave the impression that it is of exaggerated importance. The complete working of the machinery of the human body, including the details of the reproductive system, should gradually be explained, as a part of a child's general education. At the same time, care should be given that the impression is not conveyed that human sexuality is a purely physical matter – with the onset of adolescence the young person will be open to receive

the suggestion that mentality and spirituality are both involved.

Marriage is seldom now presented to young people as a positive ideal. Girls are usually encouraged to regard it through a romantic haze; or advised to avoid it if they wish to preserve their 'independence'. Boys, too, in the grip of first love, often tend to the over-idealized outlook; or may see marriage first as a means to satisfy urges their upbringing forbids them to express elsewhere. These are all negative attitudes, making no demands on the individual and offering only imperfect returns. Parents would safeguard their children's future happiness far more surely if they took care to give them both a practical aim in marriage, and the training which would fit them to gain it.

We need to restore, in the public mind, the ideal of marriage as both an end and a means.

As an end, it is the object for which our children of both sexes should be trained, to which they should come equipped with knowledge of physical and psychological facts.

As a means, it should provide for them, girl or boy, the opportunity to live a full sexual life, and a mental and spiritual life completed in partnership with a member of the other sex. Through and beyond the couple themselves, it should become the basis of a family life whose influence will go out in both space and time to add its tiny but invaluable contribution to human happiness and advancement, now and in the future.

Chapter 13

*

THE SUM OF YOUR 'PERSONAL ASSESSMENT' – VI

xviii. Am I, on balance, a success or a failure in (a) my inner life, (b) my family life, (c) my married life, (d) my working life, (e) my life as a citizen?

Do not be downcast if you have failed to reach full marks in answering the questions of which this last one is the summary. On the contrary, if you have given yourself full marks, it is surely time to think again. The man does not live who has attained one hundred per cent success in every part of his life – nor is the idea of such a creature really endurable.

Indeed, one hundred per cent success is hardly desirable even in any one sphere. If you pursue success in one line with such an enthusiasm as to have brought about such a result, it must inevitably follow that your comparative neglect of the other factors which make up all-round human life has caused corresponding failure there – resulting in complete lack of the desirable balance.

Acceptance of symbolic figures like 'the common man' has gone too far with us. Heaven forbid that the result of the wonderful advance in the basic conditions of life should be a general mediocrity from which no-one may wish to rise. We must none the less recognize that it is through balance, rather than through disproportionate specialist brilliance, that we stand the chance of gaining the most solid happiness and true measure of all-round success.

You must have had, in reviewing your life, to admit some failures. Or you may feel that, while outstanding in no one field, you have not been completely a failure in the important

things of your life. If your balance-sheet *is* balanced, you have much to be thankful for.

It is not an easy thing to make one's own 'personal assessment'. In some ways we are immensely handicapped by the ease with which we all deceive ourselves. Yet, on the other hand, if we try to exercise a full personal honesty, we are in the best position to judge ourselves – for we all know things about ourselves which we devoutly hope most others do not.

The time we have used in making this study of ourselves should not have been time wasted. Even if our all-round average is good, it is unlikely to be so good that we have not reached a closer knowledge of our own emotional make-up, strengths and temptations. Our answers to these questions should have given us bits of information about ourselves, some of which we had not really faced before. They are like pieces of a jig-saw puzzle. We must fit them together, and look closely at what we see.

Here is a piece which has got pulled a little out of shape, in the process of living. There seems to be a bit missing here; let's look around for it. Here are two pieces which should fit snugly together, but have somehow got out of line. Now is the time for us to make those adjustments which will form the pattern of our own best selves – our 'ego-ideal', in so far as it is possible for flesh and blood to attain it.

It is, of course, the first section of this multiple question which is really important. It is comprehensive in itself, and does not really need the other sub-sections at all. For once we are a success 'in ourselves', 'inside ourselves', with a balanced, harmonious nature founded upon self-knowledge and self-discipline, then 'all else will be added unto us'.

Most people do not realize this. They go on hacking away at the circumstances and at the other people around them, never realizing that the real root of their discontents and failures is within themselves. Some of those who have the greatest real external tragedies and difficulties to contend with are an object-lesson to the more fortunate. It seems as if they

have brought so great an inner wisdom to bear upon their sorrowful experience that they have been able, as it were, to absorb and assimilate those trials and transform them by a process of spiritual metabolism into still greater strength.

But do not set your aim too high – that is the danger of all theorizing. If you set out to be a saint or a hero, you may well be disappointed at the inadequacy of the material of which we are all made. So, for the moment, face the fact of what you are, sanely, and without illusion or dismay.

xix. Have I, in making this assessment, really recognized my bad as well as my good points?

Let us face the facts without illusion.

This is one last warning against that over-leniency to which we are all too prone, when it is ourselves who are in question. Do not, on the other hand, be dismayed at your own over-leniency. We all share it. But make a real effort, this once, to overcome it. After all, no-one is eavesdropping.

There is no reason to be horrified if you find yourself on the brink of an admission that you suspect in yourself deep impulses which go right against all the principles upon which you consciously try to act. The primitive instincts are above morality – or, perhaps we should say, beyond it. They are not in themselves good or bad.

The aggressive instinct, for example (whose primal form is the impulse to destroy anyone or anything which threatens our own well-being), is not in itself 'immoral' or 'wrong'. It has been necessary, in the upward drive of evolution, for creatures to be supported and inspired by a perfectly ruthless urge to live and prosper at the expense of their fellows. That urge lives on in the best of us, and sometimes takes us very much by surprise, by bursting out in some form of which later we are ashamed.

These primitive instincts are, in fact, all the more likely to take us by surprise in proportion to the extent to which we ourselves deny the possibility of their existence. If you've

got a boa-constrictor in the cupboard, it is no good saying it is not there. It is there; the danger must be guarded against; and, if possible, it must be turned to useful purpose.

That is a bad analogy, I know, since in the ordinary domestic cupboard a boa-constrictor could not be turned to much use! Though in a scientist's hands even its venom can be made useful in medicine. Let us, then, take a more practical example. A gas-pipe laid on in the home, which no-one knew how to manage or use, would be a positive menace – especially if the family denied it was there, and did not even warn the children of its existence. Yet, understood and rightly used, it is a boon. So is the force of steam, disciplined into the steam-engine. So also could be atomic force, used for our benefit instead of our destruction.

Our primitive impulses are the forces in ourselves which can be used either for good or bad purposes, and which can constitute, in either direction, a positive *drive*. Life on earth has now gone far beyond the point at which the blind instinct of self-preservation can be allowed full play at the expense of our fellow-creatures. In the animal stage, it may well have been kill or be killed, eat or be eaten. In some aspects, certainly, our society seems to be founded upon much the same principle.

Yet, in fact, that is what is wrong with our society. That is where our society is sick. We have got now to a point where our lives are so bound up together that it is not possible for one of us to injure the other without indirectly injuring ourselves. There is more to be gained now by co-operation then by following the creed of 'every man for himself'.

This is perhaps the most startling feature of the difference between Man and the lower animals. We have been endowed with that reasoning power which will enable us, if we care to take thought and to make an effort, to *use* our primitive drives instead of being used by them.

This opens out to us, both individually and as a race, enormous possibilities. When we cease to be at the mercy

of our primitive urges, we gain real control first of ourselves and then of events. Such a thing has not yet been known in the history of life on this earth.

Yet, as we have seen, to control a force one must first know that it exists. Therefore our recognition of our faults must be a great step forward, for if we analyze them yet further we shall be able to identify the workings, through them, of those particular primitive impulses which are strongest in our unconscious being.

This is not, therefore, a purely sentimental appeal to you for honesty with yourself. It is a practical suggestion, as a means to full self-understanding. Your faults, when you can recognize them, are a pointer to those hidden forces in you which insist upon 'bursting out' in ways detrimental to your own best interests.

Identify those forces – self-assertion, acquisitiveness, sexuality, or whatever they may be. You will then be better able to adapt them to the needs of civilized human life, and use for positive purposes the 'drive' they give.

xx. *Am I prepared to make some real effort towards improvement?*

This question, in view of our common human weakness, is necessary, even though it may not appear so. The accent, of course, is on the word 'real'.

If you are content to look the facts about yourself in the face, and then to sit back with the hopeless comment that you can do nothing about them, then there is something radically wrong.

I do not, however, believe it. No-one would trouble to go through all the immensely difficult stages of a really frank self-analysis for any other purpose than to make a genuine effort to turn it to practical account. It is not, after all, so very pleasant to face the real facts about oneself, that one would do it for fun or as a mere pastime.

So one last word of encouragement – Your 'personal assessment' is likely to have been, on balance, neither better nor worse than most people's. You have your particular weaknesses. They have theirs. You have your strengths, too, of which you may well be proud. But do not concentrate upon your strengths in such a way that they show up even more strongly the neglected weaknesses. Cultivate balance – not the balance of appalling weakness in one thing against abnormal strength in another, but the real balance which comes from the effort to raise the all-round average so far as is humanly possible.

Perfection never existed. Do not aim for it. Make your aim normal human content through normal human character. That is 'successful living' – and it is worth making an effort to gain.

Chapter 14

*

THE REASONABLE GOAL

IT may be worth while to try to sum up the 'reasonable goal' to which we have all a right to aspire, and to note the conditions under which we may hope to attain it.

We may wish for moderate success in working life, with the full development and use of our natural capacity.

We may expect the opportunity to marry and to have children, to give love and to receive it.

We may endeavour to gain an understanding of the nature of the world in which we live, and the purpose of our existence.

It is within such a pattern that we can best fulfil the demands of our three-fold nature, satisfying body, mind and spirit.

Unfortunately, only too many people tend, through unthinking submission to outer pressures and inner impulses, to lose sight of the need to keep a balance between these demands. Some, pushed by the need for self-assertion, overemphasize the desire for material 'success', sacrificing and warping other deep needs of their own nature in order to attain it. Others, driven by an abnormal hunger for love, sacrifice intellectual and spiritual needs in order to possess it – only to find that it can never be 'possessed' in that sense. Few, in comparison, are so obsessed with the things of the spirit that they neglect the demands of body and mind – but they do exist, and their state is no better than that of those people who seem at first sight their opposites. Sometimes their imbalance, producing fanaticism, results in large-scale misery.

Where a lack of harmony and balance exists in the life of the individual, there is always a reason. That reason is usually to be found in some injurious experience met in early life. Self-knowledge gives us the power to understand, and through understanding control, such warping of our own inner natures.

i. Our goal in personal life

No human being can be complete without satisfaction of the natural desire to give and receive affection. In many people this normal desire becomes perverted through emotional injury in childhood. Where such injury is radical, the result may be that thereafter they become incapable of real affection; or, where the damage is directly related to their outlook upon sexual matters, they may find their sexual impulse diverted from normal channels.

These, however, are the extremes of psychological and sexual abnormality. It is with the 'ordinary' man or woman that we are now concerned. Yet how few of the 'ordinary' are really 'ordinary'! Thousands of men and women drag round with them the dead-weight of early unfortunate experience or wrong training which prevents their gaining normal happiness in love and marriage.

Some, who for some reason or other have as children felt themselves to be unloved or unwanted, tend in later life to try to 'possess' those they love. Many young women spoil their own chances of marriage by making that possessiveness only too plain. Many young mothers unknowingly warp the emotions and later lives of their children by fastening upon them the tentacles of such possessive love.

When two people enter upon the adventure of marriage, there should be not only love, but also the willingness to permit freedom to the partner – freedom of thought and freedom of action. This, of course, assumes the partner's good faith – but where good faith cannot be assumed, there can be no basis for happy marriage.

When two people enter upon the adventure of parenthood, there should be love between them, and love between parents and children – but, again, not a love which makes eternal demands. At least half of love consists in giving, in permitting freedom of development; and at least half the art of living together – either as a couple or as a family – consists in applying self-knowledge and self-control for the benefit of all.

As we have already seen, most young people tend before marriage to idealize each other – not only because they have been brought up to look upon marriage through a romantic haze, but also because young people in their comparatively narrow experience are far more absolute in their judgements than those who have seen more of the world. The best advice to them would seem to be to look inwards, and to realize that their partner is bound to share not only the good impulses, but also the less good impulses which they have found in themselves. The lover and the loved one are human beings sharing a common nature. They have no right to expect more from the other than they themselves can give. Nor should they ever stop trying to give more than they do.

Young married couples tend after a time to take each other too much for granted. The partner becomes so much a piece of the furniture that it is entirely forgotten that he or she is a human being with all the human reactions. People who would never dream of being rude and insulting outside their homes are often very much so inside them. Sometimes they tend to 'let off steam' there all the more for the repression which is forced upon them by social convention outside. Yet why should such social convention, existing to sweeten relationships through the control of our feelings, be less regarded at home than anywhere else? People who want to make a real success of marriage will treat their partners with no less courtesy than they would treat anyone else.

Young parents who have never stopped to examine their own natures, and the causes which have contributed to make them what they are, very often fail to apply in their

relationship with their children the intelligence which they may bring to work or to intellectual pursuits. They may punish a child for bed-wetting, instead of having taken the trouble to find out that this is a symptom of psychological disturbance. They may discuss a child while he is present, oblivious of the fact that in so doing they are encouraging self-consciousness, and – if it is his misdeeds which are in question – implanting in him a sense of guilt and shame which may for ever stunt his emotional development.

Let it be said here that no child is likely to suffer such injury if he is justly and reasonably punished for what he himself understands to have been misbehaviour. The proper function of childhood is that of a time of learning to live. The body is learning and growing in order to take on the full functions of adult life; mind and spirit should be doing the same. The chief lesson the child must learn is the existence of others and their right to consideration equally with himself. There will be no ill-results from such reasonable punishment as may be necessary to remind him of this.

It is the unjust, the unreasonable, and the thoughtless action by parents which is most likely to cause a child emotional damage. Parents, for instance, frequently quarrel in a child's presence, or speak derogatorily of each other in his hearing. Yet would it not seem that commonsense – if not a positive knowledge of a little psychology – should tell them that to do so is to divide the soul of the child in his natural attachment to, and need of, them both? Some small self-understanding should make them realize that, for the child, the whole sense of security rests upon the feeling that the father and mother are there – unchangeable and constant, both to be depended upon in different and complementary ways.

During schooldays, parents can cause a child to suffer by expecting too much from him in physical or mental prowess, without having regard to the simple facts that we are not all equally endowed by nature, and that our rate of development

differs very greatly from one person to the next. In such a case, a father or mother might ask themselves first what deep sense of inadequacy exists within them, that they need to salve it with the child's small successes? For it is often of *themselves*, not of the child, that they really wish to be proud.

Conversely, some parents exist who, taken up with their own pursuits, fail to show a sufficient appreciation of those small triumphs or of those minor terrors and tragedies which are so big to the child. The result is likely to be that he will retain a strong impression that he is unloved, and perhaps even unwanted.

Each new child born into a family gives rise to a new set of problems, with which parents will best deal if they have first thought back to their own childhood and recaptured the sensitiveness of child-nature. The eldest child must not be made to feel neglected by comparison with a new baby. The youngest must not be encouraged to remain the 'baby', simply because the mother or father prefers to possess an infant rather than the perhaps less attractive, if more truly interesting, growing child.

No; it is not easy to keep a proper balance in the affairs either of marriage or of family life. Still less is it easy to do so through the wearying days and dispiriting moments when things seem persistently to go wrong, and patience gives way. Yet it is in this very sphere that we may make our greatest successes or suffer our worst defeats. Surely, therefore, it is worth a good deal of trouble to try to fit ourselves for these adventures, these important *professions*. They are open to us all, and offer to all a chance of success and of rich reward, yet in them alone, of all our chief spheres of activity, we are given no instruction or training whatever, except what we ourselves choose to seek.

ii. Our goal in business life

Plainly, to reach the goal of success in our work, it is necessary first to seek the technical skill needed to grasp new

opportunities as they present themselves. This is usually the task of youth, and one which youth sometimes resents; yet as many older folk know, it is one which in the end richly repays the self-denial and self-control needed to carry it out.

On the other hand, technical skill alone will never bring us real success, except in the most routine of tasks, unless we can understand and apply the science of 'getting on' with people. Whether our position is high or low, much of our time in working life will be spent in contact with other human beings, and upon the nature of our relationship with them our chances of success will depend.

It is impossible to lay down rules for dealing with all the various kinds of situation which may arise, but in general it is safe to say that we shall always be able to deal satisfactorily with others if we will realize that they share our own fundamental nature.

Employers who bully, employees who are impertinent, colleagues who do not 'pull their weight' – all these are reacting to various states and conditions which exist in themselves and in their lives, to which we ourselves might react in a similar way if they existed for us. If we allow their treatment of us to set up in us instinctive reactions of dislike and resentment, we are doing nothing to mend the situation, nothing to make them any better, and nothing to help ourselves.

Only when we understand why other people are as they are can we do anything positive to improve matters generally. But we shall never understand human behaviour until we have first disentangled the motives behind our own.

People gifted in personal relationships will always, other things being approximately equal, get much further than those who are always rubbing others up the wrong way. This is very natural, since even business does not depend only upon material facts, but largely upon the character and reactions of the persons concerned.

Managements – whether consisting of employers, em-

ployees' representatives, or both – recognize by implication the need for harmony in any undertaking. It is far better to have a staff of normally intelligent people, working together without continual personal upsets, than to have others superior in skill but unable through temperamental difficulties to co-operate.

In business, as in personal life, we need training in dealing with those around us. Life itself teaches many of us, but its school is a hard one. By the method of trial and error we may learn much in the end, but meanwhile we have lost many opportunities and many friends.

Once we recognize the need for such training, we can begin to seek it through the channel of self-knowledge, always 'putting ourselves in the place' of the persons with whom we are dealing. What is the best way to sell something? How can an earned rebuke be given which will not discourage an employee? What attitude is most likely to gain for you the promotion you want?

Such questions as these are always most easily answered by the person who understands *himself*. Other people's reactions are not a closed book – or they need not be – if you have sufficient self-knowledge to be able to assess what yours would be in their place.

Solid capacity, and the ability to get on with others, will be likely to bring you the reasonable degree of business success for which you have a right to hope.

iii. Our goal in community life

The person whose goal in community life is to impress himself upon others and to be regarded as 'top dog' is in fact an enemy of the community, whatever the unselfish motives he may ascribe to himself. He is like a diseased cell, which refuses any longer to carry out its function as part of the body, and decides to live upon lines of its own.

In just the same way as a cell cannot live on its own

without upsetting the harmony of the whole body – taking its share, and perhaps more, from the work of the others, and giving nothing in return – so also no one of us can cut ourselves off from the body of the community to which we belong. We are indirectly dependent upon the labour of others for all the necessities and comforts of our lives. It should not be possible for us to enjoy them without giving something in return. Nor, in fact, in the fullest sense, is it possible – for if we grab material things without regard to others' rights, we shall find the balance redressed in a lack of inner harmony and spiritual contentment.

This is no argument against the preservation of individuality. If, indeed, we sacrifice individuality by adopting mass-produced views, we make all the less likely any further progress for the community. The condition of the community will always reflect the condition of those individuals of which it is composed. So long as individuals refrain from the spiritual adventure of independent thought, so long will community-life remain barren and static. So long as individuals are disturbed and divided within themselves, so long will the community remain disturbed and divided, with all the miseries which can be seen around us in the world to-day.

There are many practical ways in which men and women can serve the community in which they live, by public service and by private uprightness. By no means the least service, however, is that involved in reaching self-knowledge and self-understanding, and in training young people to similar habits of thought.

Reference was made in Part I to the possibility that in the human race the two principles of Determinism and Free Will only begin where Determinism ends.

That is to say: so long as we do not understand the instinctive reactions of our own hearts and minds, those reactions will be *determined* by instinct. Though we may have the illusion of Free Will, we shall not have Free Will in fact – because our actions will be controlled by instincts all-

powerful because their existence is not recognized, or not understood.

Free Will, and right action, can begin only when the individual understands himself sufficiently well to be aware of his peculiar tendencies to weakness and temptation, and is thus placed in the position of being able to make really free choice of what he shall do.

What applies to men applies also to nations. What applies to nations applies also to the community of mankind.

Though political and social activity may bring short-term results in helping to make this a better world to live in (with, however, many incidental wrongs and cruelties), only widespread education, handed on from one generation to the next, can provide a really effective long-term improvement in the nature of Man – on which, in the last analysis, all other improvements depend.

We do not need to breed a race of angels, but there is certainly a pressing need to evolve a race of men and women who will no longer be at the mercy of their own primitive instincts in their relations with each other. Nor will it be sufficient, to do as has been attempted by some religions in the past – to try to suppress primitive instinct by denying that it is there, by deciding to ignore it, or by punishing the body for forces which belong more justly to the lower regions of the mind and spirit.

The need is first to recognize the existence of primitive impulse, and to understand the mechanism by which it produces results in our conduct; and, secondly, to develop the power to control our actions accordingly, for the common good – which includes in the end our own.

In the words of Plato:

Actions and words ought to be such as will enable the inward man to have the firmest control over the entire man . . . nursing and rearing the tame parts of it, and checking the growth of the wild; and thus to pursue his training on the principle of concerning himself for all jointly, and reconciling them to one another and to himself.

Postscript

*

THE WORLD AND YOU

THE aims of this book have been, first to define or isolate those principles which seem to work through all existence, and secondly to examine how, applied to our small daily and personal life, they can bring us into more harmonious living.

There has been, in Part II, a strong emphasis upon *self* – upon your self as the centre of your individual existence, and as something which may be improved or disciplined by an effort of will. This emphasis contains a subtle danger.

While it is true that most of us need to 'take ourselves in hand', and realize first what we truly are and what our particular temptations and weaknesses may be, before we can make the effort necessary for betterment, yet this may very well cause us to concentrate upon our self exclusively, losing touch with the human society of which we are a part.

Yet when we do this, we are once more upon a path which leads to lack of harmony – since no one of us exists in a vacuum, but to a very great degree in our relationships with other individuals, and with the community of which we are a part.

To concentrate upon self, even upon the improvement or development of the self, to the neglect of our place among our fellow men, is to be in danger of another kind of lack of balance. In order to avoid that danger, it is necessary to aim at a point where self-discipline becomes 'instinctive' and 'unconscious', while our conscious effort is bent upon understanding of communal duty, and towards such activity as that understanding may entail.

You have, no doubt, some idea of the way in which human society has developed through the ages. In general, we may say that just as the first simple amoeba gave way to the more highly complicated and more efficient forms of life – giving rise at last to the evolution of the human race – so also have the first simple human societies led to the complicated systems in which we live to-day.

The social trend has always been an evolution from families and small tribes to great nations, just as in the biological sphere it was from single cells to complex organisms. The basic force behind evolution has, in each case, been self-preservation. It would seem, in fact, that all our primitive instincts branch from the one paramount impulse that life must continue. Where that instinct has full play, without the restraints of reason and conscience, the result is that self-preservation rules even at the cost of morality and ideals. Morality and ideals are not things which belong to nature in the raw; indeed, it is doubtful if life would have survived upon the earth if they had been.

Self-preservation is, in fact, a non-moral thing; that is to say, it is something neither good nor bad in itself, but which may be put to good or bad uses.

I believe, however, that the higher stages of evolution which involve community living suspend the original laws of the struggle for existence, and give rise to a new set adapted to a higher level of true civilization.

The first units of life which appeared upon the earth, countless ages before the coming of the first creature which could walk upon the land, were, so far as is known, single cells. By a process of trial and error these discovered the advantages of community, leading to the formation of more complex organisms. The cells of such complex organisms co-operated to share the work of existence. Some took on one job, some another – just as, when the child grows in the womb, some of the cells which will form his body take over one task, and some, other tasks. The whole complicated

mechanisms of the human body and mind are founded upon such specialization.

Similarly, in the family unit, which was and is the basis of human society, a 'division of labour' was the natural sequel to community life. The man tended to take on one branch of work, the woman another. The result over long generations of such specialization may be readily understood. Such understanding should go far to lessen cheap sex-antagonisms.

In creating higher forms of life, self-preservation, as we have seen, brought together the single cells, thus endowing them with power to live more safely and fully together than they could do separately. In sex, two human beings unite in a similar way, in order to enrich their mutual lives. In society, men and women create a communal life with the same unconscious aim.

Each specialist cell must be distinctively constituted. The difference of constitution is, indeed, the natural outcome of the different purpose. So with man and woman. As the result of many ages of specialization in the work of life each is best adapted to his or her distinct task. While individuals vary, it remains a fact that greater physical strength and initiative belong chiefly to the male, and greater sympathy and intuition to the female, and the natural consequences of their different spheres of activity.

It seems likely, indeed, that Man will continue to obtain the raw material of the home, and Woman to use that material to make the home a positive entity – whose value is beyond the mere sum of the parts of which it is made. If both fulfil their purpose, each giving and receiving from the other, they form a positive and constructive unit of good living.

The two sexes were bound together from the beginning in the mutual need of self-preservation and reproduction by their dependence upon each other. The same closely related instincts must have been responsible for Man's next upward step beyond the isolated family unit at war with its neighbours.

Related families, in community, were stronger and less vulnerable than isolated ones. The first settled communities had to be ready to defend themselves at any moment, while ambitions and greeds often sent them upon expeditions against other groups – but gradually settled tribes emerged to make for themselves a higher and richer way of living. There was never a continuous upward progress. Again and again a settlement or tribe would be overwhelmed by its rivals – but its way of living was seldom quite done away with. Often the invaders themselves would pick up and continue the arts and crafts of a conquered people.

So knowledge went on, not always handed down in a straight line by generations of peaceful folk, but sometimes picked up by unexpected hands to be carried on. This was no rapid process, any more than that of the evolution of life itself. Over many thousands of years the human race learned and grew, feeling its way – prompted by the instinct of self-preservation – towards higher levels of civilization. Many were the errors and many the wrongs perpetrated on the way. Yet out of that mess and muddle came gradually the technology, the science and the philosophy which give us, if we care to understand them rightly, the opportunity to build a good life in this world.

'EQUALITY' AND 'FREEDOM'

The 'division of labour', as the beginning of specialized knowledge, laid the foundation of material prosperity and scientific advance, dividing up among various sections of the community the work necessary to the well-being of the whole. It has, however, had one result which, in practice, has proved unfortunate. Distinctions came to be made not only between different kinds of work, but also between different kinds of men.

As we have already noted, we are not born 'equal'. Various talents are given to us, and it cannot perhaps be ignored that

this enables some gifted people to give a special kind of service which those less gifted cannot offer. It is therefore a natural tendency to give particular respect to them as well as to their work.

Where strict equality of opportunity was given, this should in theory have the result that only gifted persons gained special respect, and that all gifted persons were able to secure that respect. In fact, as we can see only too well, that is not the case. Opportunity is not equal, and this I believe to be the result of the fact that in past ages the respect which should be given to certain kinds of work has been transferred instead to certain kinds of people. In other words, the 'caste' system – which in one form or another existed in all primitive societies and has remained with us until the present day – limited opportunity for natural talent and transferred respect from individual ability to 'class'.

We may suppose that in earliest times the strongest and craftiest in war and hunting were the 'aristocrats' of the tribe. Self-preservation made it necessary for them to be terrible to any challenger, not only from outside, but also from inside the tribe. They were therefore not only 'aristocrats', but autocrats too. Power itself, desire for which begins only as an offshoot of the urge for self-preservation, began to appeal to those already powerful, so that they wanted more power still. Thus began the first empires, in process of creating which man inflicted upon man terrible suffering, yet which brought into being the undoubted benefits which civilization can confer.

In primitive conditions, the existence of a special ruling and warrior class was not necessarily an anomaly, for the children of the ruler or warrior were specially trained for the part they were later to play in community life, and so rigorous was such a training that only the wisest and strongest could survive.

At the same time, however, in the daily life of the ordinary people, the 'caste' system extended itself to all kinds of work.

Trades and crafts tended to be carried on from father to son. Nor, in primitive conditions, was that necessarily either unnatural or undesirable. The father trained his son in his own trade, and traditional methods were handed down through generations. With the coming of commerce and the hoarding of wealth in money, however, this system broke down. Leisured classes came into existence which were, in fact, living either upon the gains of their forefathers, or upon the work of others. Further, instead of continuing through the 'division of labour' to share the work necessary to the community in a co-operative way, various 'castes' began to pursue their own purposes and advantage rather than that of the community as a whole.

Here humankind broke away from Nature's example in biology. The history of class is also the history of conflict. Men have lost sight of the ideal of service to the community, and have sought instead to serve their own primitive and unregulated instinct towards self-preservation and self-assertion. Foolishly so – since in the long view self-preservation is best served by service to the communal welfare. Individual men have not, on the whole, so far taken that long view. Until they learn to do so, there will be conflict within nations and between nations.

The power of the fighting autocrat always declined when a community became settled and rich. While men strong in war would be honoured and have chief place, yet those who were able to organize their trading in such a way as to enrich themselves beyond the rest would have great power too. If not themselves strong in arm, they had riches to buy strong arms to do their bidding. So again and again in history the story was repeated of conflict between the outright man of action and those families grown rich on the fruits of past conquest or commercial acumen.

The instinct of self-preservation which originally brought human families together for mutual security became, at various stages in the world's history, so far perverted from

its useful purpose that nations not only fought one another from greed or from pride, but that also, within the nations, classes oppressed one another – accepting as natural such vile institutions as slavery.

To-day the idea of factual slavery is abhorrent to us, although less than a hundred years have passed since it was abolished from wide territories – not only in America, but in British India, the French Empire and in Brazil. Let us hope that it has gone for ever, and that no new Dark Ages will ever give it opportunity to rise again.

Yet we should consider to what degree of freedom mankind can aspire. In a sense, no one of us can be completely free. The adult finds as time goes on that he is more and more bound, by duties and responsibilities, to modify his private will and selfish desires, for the sake of others. Such assumption of reasonable responsibility is, indeed, the sign of maturity. The sign of collective maturity will be the extension of such a sense of responsibility beyond personal ties to ties of humanity – but that time has not yet come. It is likely to come only when Man has realized the necessity to understand and control the workings of the instinct of self-preservation which – having been the spur to his achievements so far – may, unless disciplined, eventually destroy him.

To-day we do not any longer have slavery in the world as a social institution. In theory, at any rate, men are born free. In fact, of course, that is not so to the extent we might wish. Some gain great and disproportionate power through wealth, and can influence events more than others can do; although the means by which such wealth is gained, and the personal qualities which have enabled them to gain it, are not necessarily the best qualifications for the exercise of such power.

If in a community all members were 'slaves' to each other in the sense that they thought more of others' welfare than of their private gain, we might have the ideal state. But where any one class of people – even indirectly – owns the bodies, and tries to own the minds, of other human beings, then the

principles of harmony, balance and co-operation which rule throughout Nature and the Universe are violated, and only conflict can follow.

CHANGING IDEALS

Until about one hundred and fifty years ago, changes in the structure of society were on the whole gradual and slow. Every human community went through slow processes of change, having first its warriors, later its hereditary nobles, and later again its money-powerful citizens as a 'nobility', to support whom worked the tenant-farmers, the master-merchants and the landless labourers and workmen.

Such class divisions were not unnatural, or even unuseful, in the conditions which then existed. Where military security was a paramount need, it was inevitable that the warrior should be given chief place. Where material prosperity was the purpose, honours and power came into the hands of those men who best served that end. With widespread illiteracy and ignorance, the 'feudal' system served its purpose, so long as the possessors of land protected and cared for those in their service.

The minds of men were, however, opening to the possibility of education and knowledge, and to the idea of political freedom – of individual equality before the law. At the same time, material circumstances were changing very rapidly – at any rate as soon as industrialization began – and bringing about the growth of other ideas, in what many people believe to be a retrograde sense.

If we should ever find ourselves tending to believe that machine-civilization represents a real progress from the point of view of moral value, it would be well for us to remember how slick and shoddy many of our present-day 'values' are. Although there were in the medieval practice of Christianity many contradictions and cruelties, at least it succeeded in implanting in men's minds the idea of a higher

motive in life than mere profit. The great trading and merchant organizations of the Middle Ages had very strict rules to prevent bad workmanship and the sale of inferior goods. Men began, however, as religious scepticism increased, to fall away from these high ideals.

People of understanding and great moral strength can survive – as Plato knew – the loss of merely superstitious sectarian beliefs and arbitrary rules of conduct, and still behave well. Lesser people tend, when their faith is shaken, to behave according to their primitive instincts, without regard to others. So the great principle that there is a fundamental dishonesty in bad workmanship began to lose its hold upon the minds of men.

It was unfortunate for the Western world that at the same times as the ideas of liberty and equality began to take hold upon men's minds, the idea of responsibility to a Supreme Power began to weaken. Newly-invented machinery was quickly taken up and exploited by men whose first object was to make money – and gain power – without regard, ultimately, to the giving of solid value, or to the responsibility which money and power should bring.

In an ideal community, where the aim of each member is to work for the good of all – whether that is understood in terms of service to a Supreme Power or to the communal welfare – new inventions could only be a benefit in providing a better life for the people. They would give more leisure to the individual, and opportunity for development in other directions than merely as a working unit. They would ensure sufficient goods that no-one need go without, and even make 'luxury' goods available to all.

From such a Utopian dream, we have to return to the reality as we see it around us. Human beings learned, in the early stages of their story, that greater security and comfort were to be found in organized life rather than in anarchy. But they failed to learn Nature's next lesson: that the organism, biological or social, can exist usefully and healthily

only so long as all its 'cells' are giving of their best to each other, and living in 'mutual aid'.

Machinery came to mankind at the same time when, in Europe at any rate, the ethical ideals of medieval Christianity had been lost. In turning away from the superstitions which had grown up around religion, they also cast away the truths on which it was founded – as Alfred Noyes wrote, they emptied out not only the dirty bath-water, but the baby as well!

The power, generated by steam, and later by electricity, became the driving-force behind factories which sprang up rapidly – first in Britain, since our people have a peculiar faculty for invention, and later all over the world. To obtain the coal necessary to produce this power, new coal seams were opened up. In both factories and mines, the labour of women and children was used because they would work for less wages than men. So quickly – compared to the slow social development of preceding centuries – did this process take place, that at first society was not ready to meet it.

Poor landless people saw a chance to increase the family income by sending their children to work in mines and factories. Those whose only concern was profit used this cheap labour in order to make greater gain. Power made transport suddenly easy and cheap. It was possible through growing railway and steamship networks to increase world trade. British manufactured goods went all over the globe. At the same time, foodstuffs produced by peasant labour abroad were imported. Gradually this led to the decline of our own countryside, forcing yet more country people into the towns and into mechanical work if they were to earn their living. So, at first, a few men made tremendous fortunes while the working masses existed on a bare margin above starvation.

No-one suggests that the early capitalist, or employer of labour, at the beginning of the last century, sat down and plotted how best to exploit his fellow-men. But once one producer had cut down the expenses of his business by using

cheap labour, or by turning out shoddy goods instead of well-made ones, then those competing with him were forced by sheer weight of facts to behave in a similar manner. Indeed, very many of the greater wrongs and injustices we may see around us are not caused by deliberate wickedness, but rather by the working together of a chain of circumstances which need not exist if only people could *get together* to prevent it.

In time, of course, in England the public conscience did awaken. Great writers like Dickens, and reformers like Lord Shaftesbury, helped to open people's eyes to the misery which millions were suffering. After great agitation and labour troubles laws were passed which regulated hours and conditions of work, and prevented women being employed in the mines or tiny children in the factories.

It is not with these historical facts in themselves that we are now concerned, except in so far as they help to show the evils which have come about through the unregulated working in mankind of the primitive instinct of self-preservation and aggression, which must be disciplined into community-preservation if our civilization is to survive.

THE CLASS STRUGGLE

Past social systems, which were founded upon the principle of reward in return for service – where the farmer paid tribute in goods or service to overlords who finally stood in similar relation to the King – worked, roughly speaking, very well in the conditions which then existed. Such systems are abhorrent to us to-day chiefly because their basis was serf or slave labour, outraging our conception of political freedom. We have, however, our own social problems, which have become extremely complicated and involved, because our habit of thought is built upon *self* and not upon *community*.

It was self-preservation rather than community-preservation which gave the impetus to industrial development, in

itself a good thing, but one which brought in its train the incidental wrongs of oppression of labour. Marx calculated very nicely upon the instinctive reactions of human nature in foretelling the time when the huge proletariat brought into existence by industrialization would realize its potential political power and take that power into its own hands by violence. *But injustice is always injustice, and wrong is always wrong, whoever its perpetrators may be.* We may see in the world to-day the many sins and cruelties effected by different sets of people against one another, because men will not realize that.

If our trades and industries are run in the future, not for the profit of any one class, but for the good of a nation as a whole, then we shall be getting a little nearer to prosperity and peace among ourselves. There is, as Nature herself teaches us, only one way to harmony and health – through balance and co-operation. So long as there are true grounds for social unrest in certain strata of society, so long are the interests of all ultimately threatened. It can profit no-one in the end to uphold a system built upon injustices, since such lack of balance in social life must try to adjust itself – and the greater the original disharmony the more violent the upheaval involved in that process of adjustment.

There is no doubt but that the struggle from amoeba to human life was long and difficult, involving suffering and continual effort. Nor can we doubt that the struggle from a society founded on the 'survival of the fittest' to one founded on mutual help must be equally long and difficult, involving equally both suffering and continual effort. But surely we have gone on long enough letting blind primitive forces have play. In social as in personal life, we must begin to try to control them. To work for this should be our aim as citizens in our own community.

WAR

War is part of the childhood of mankind, as surely as destructiveness is part of human childhood. The infant who tears his toys to pieces is expressing that assertive urge which was necessary to the survival of primitive life. He has to be taught to control it, or he becomes an anti-social menace in later years. It seems that the group of people always lags behind the development of its individual members. While private murder is no longer tolerated, and occurs in only isolated instances, public murder continues, and on an increasingly large scale.

Although private murder occurs only rarely, it should be realized that the impulses which could lead to murder are common to us all. It is likely that few of us have not at some time, under stress of great emotion, experienced a pure impulse of murder, although our moral training would make us refuse to recognize it as such. We seldom recognize such an impulse when it comes, because we should have to be too much ashamed of ourselves – but the impulse to destroy those who hurt or injure us is latent in us all, however much we may prevent its expression, or even its acknowledgement to ourselves.

Collectively, we have not attained to the same degree of control, perhaps because the mass consciousness tends to be at the level of the most primitive of the individuals contained in the group. Further, when by agreement control is cast off, many of the most highly developed individuals react all the more strongly for their former suppression of aggressive instincts, which is why some of the mildest people become rabid warmongers once the die is cast.

Rationally, we are all against war. We know it to be sordid and shameful, bringing in its train abominable cruelty and suffering. We know by now that it solves nothing, leaving victors and vanquished equally miserable and exhausted, and giving rise to whole new sets of problems. Psychologically,

however, we are not all against war – or it could never happen.

The overt reasons why war takes place are lack of understanding and conflict between nations – things which circumstances could cure. The covert reasons lie in ourselves – in the inner conflicts we are not trained to resolve, and for which we find an outlet in the hatreds and violences which war sanctions. This can be cured only by a change of heart in all individuals. This set of reasons for war we might call 'the immaturity of mankind'.

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING AND CONFLICT BETWEEN NATIONS

Every nation has struggled up from small beginnings, through long and arduous conflict. Each people, or collection of peoples, has its own language and its own traditions. It may also have very bitter memories of its own historical past – where it has suffered deeply at the hands of some other nation.

Language barriers are so obvious and 'taken for granted' that we sometimes forget to allow for the difficulties they cause. They do, however, very effectively prevent all but the privileged classes in each country from having any real understanding of the ideas and outlook of even close neighbours. As a result, social custom can vary very greatly as between nation and nation. That does not mean that human nature is any different. Man, whatever his origin in race or nation, has everywhere the same impulses and the same needs. But just as a family will have its own special ways, perhaps even its own kind of jokes which are meaningless to other people, so also every nation has its own habits and customs which seem strange to others.

Now although we have the instinct of the search for knowledge, which has sent men out on voyages of exploration all over the world, there is also deep in all of us a fear and

distrust of the unknown. That is why, the world over, the foreigner is usually regarded – at any rate by untravelled and ignorant people – as something apart and suspect. This is less so among those European peoples which, having no natural frontiers, have been forced by events to intermingle from time to time, but it is strong in countries like our own, cut off from any close communication with their neighbours until modern times.

Now, suddenly, nations find themselves more or less upon each other's doorsteps. If we can survive the economic crisis resulting from the war, and gain a good life for our people, let us hope that it will mean that more of them than ever before will get the opportunity to travel and meet people of other nations. For so quickly have improvements in world communications made the world 'smaller', that men's minds have not been able to catch up. The old distrusts and dislikes, which were the natural result of separate development in days when it was impossible for people of different nations to meet, still linger on.

Still lingering also in some nations, as we mentioned before, are memories of past conflicts. Although central European nations have gained something from being forced from time to time to mingle, yet the continual warfare over national boundaries has left deep impression of hatred and wish for revenge. The Serbs and Croats, the Sudeten Germans and the Czechs, the Italians and Yugoslavs, the Germans and the French, have all suffered so bitterly at each other's hands in the past that the old conflicts have left bitterness behind which can prove the seed of new conflict.

In the individual, we should say that the 'emotional development' had suffered from early trauma – that is to say, that the person had been left after an early experience with an impression so deep as to prevent or retard his normal growth into adulthood. That can be just as true in the case of a nation.

It is, for instance, obviously silly for the Irishman, however

deep the wrongs of his nation at the hands of past generations of Englishmen, to foster in his heart hatred for the ordinary modern British man-in-the-street, who is quite innocent equally of Cromwell's massacres or of the shooting of the leaders of the Easter rebellion. It is equally silly for an Englishman to cling to the 'traditional' dislike of the French – though he may never have met a Frenchman or read any of their literature – just because England and France were at war again and again over hundreds of years. Such prejudices are not only silly, but dangerous, since they offer such fertile ground for the fomenting of new hatreds and new wars. Such misunderstanding of other nations, with general ignorance of their ways of life, and dislikes and distrusts of long standing, are basic factors which help to make war possible.

In this ground of misunderstanding, it is easy for conflict between nations to spring up. Owing to the way in which they have developed upon differing lines, though from similar beginnings and by similar stages, there is no cohesion among the nations of the earth. While peoples were still in the more primitive stages, they obeyed the instinct of self-preservation by going out and snatching the land or wealth they coveted. That is to say, they did it openly and unashamed, glorifying the workings of that instinct under fine names. To-day they still do it – but because they are by now uneasily aware that they should not, they dress up their reasons more skilfully, under a new set of phrases.

Competition between nations to develop new territories, pressure caused by the expansion of populations beyond the resources of their own land, the demand of modern industrial civilization for certain essentials such as oil and petrol – these are the things which in the modern world bring nations into conflict and produce war in the soil which misunderstanding has prepared.

Three hundred years ago, if a nation coveted the natural wealth of another people, it frankly sent a 'colonizing

expedition', if it was strong enough to do so. To-day, the conscience of the civilized world is just sufficiently awakened for that to cause an outcry. Things are therefore done in a different way. Diplomatic arguments take place. Governments move in hidden ways to exert pressure. But if the underground conflict becomes bitter enough, the situation may at any time explode in war.

Even here, however, conflicts between national interests have not always been the result of bad intention on the part either of individual states, or of their rulers. Usually, particularly in more recent years, it has been a combination of circumstances – which no-one cared, or was in a position, to control – which has brought about the undesirable result.

The ordinary man-in-the-street does not want war. But industrial interests anxious to safeguard markets or to exploit sources of raw materials – and statesmen quite altruistically desirous to ensure the prosperity of their countries – may be forced by the circumstances to act in such a way that war *is* the final outcome.

IMMATURITY OF NATIONS

So you will see that, just as trouble results inside a nation because its people have not fully realized the lesson of the need to live as a community rather than as individuals fighting for personal self-preservation, so also does trouble result between nations because they too have not learned that lesson. Nor is it possible that they should, until it has first been learned by the individuals who make up each nation.

The uncontrolled working of self-preservation in the individual leads to the pursuit of personal and sectional gain rather than community welfare. The uncontrolled working of self-preservation in the nation leads to the pursuit of national gain rather than world-welfare. Yet if a part of the body is sick, all parts are affected. If the body or the mind is sick, the mind or body cannot, in turn, escape harm. When is mankind

going to realize the full practical application of these basic facts?

What is wrong with people to-day is emotional immaturity. They spoil their own lives and those of everyone they meet because they have not learned to control primitive instinct by understanding the way in which their own minds and impulses work. By far the great majority of people are the prisoners of what has happened to them in childhood. They have not developed that faculty of self-criticism and self-examination which will enable them to adjust their future growth to redress the uneven balance which early experience has caused in them.

What is wrong with national life is merely the same thing on a wider scale. And what is wrong with the world, in international life, is simply the same thing taken to its final, largest and most disastrous conclusion.

Yet the maturity of the world can come only from the maturity of nations. The maturity of nations can grow only from the maturity of individuals. The maturity of individuals can come about, once they have realized the need, only by their own will.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Perhaps now it may be plain why your 'personal assessment', your answers to it, and your determination to act upon the results drawn from it, are of an importance far transcending even their immediate usefulness in your own personal and business life.

The wider problem is made much more urgent now by the fact that the immense power which can be obtained and used, for the purposes of both war and peace in splitting the atom, may be a menace to the continuance of man's very existence. We must either grow up or perish.

Atom power could be developed so well that we need have no fear for the future prosperity of our kind. It could be used

to lessen the labour of daily living, giving to all more leisure in which to develop not only the fullest physical existence but also man's mental and spiritual powers. Yet atom power can be used, as you know, for the manufacture of weapons so dreadful that they might well wipe out most of our existing civilization.

There is much in our civilization which does not deserve to survive. On the other hand, in it is stored the sum of our progress so far. Has it all got to be destroyed, and the upward surge of life to begin again – if it is given the chance – from the beginning? Are all the millions of years since the amoeba to go for nothing at all?

The problem of war is to-day more urgent than ever. Just at the time when thinking people have been hoping that humanity might learn step by step to be really adult, there has suddenly reared up in our path this gigantic question-mark. The things that people who care about humanity have not dared to hope would be gained for a very long time must now be gained quickly – *or else!*

We are asked to make a swift adjustment of our ways of thinking and living. We are asked to shoulder a responsibility for which, as yet, we are not really ready. No-one would put a lethal weapon into the hands of a child. Yet humanity, which collectively is still childish, has now been given the means to destroy itself. Fortunately, whether or not we remain childish is a matter not quite beyond our power to control. Every man or woman who takes thought and applies self-knowledge to the more efficient running of his or her own personal life, contributes a mite towards the more efficient running of the affairs of mankind.

The nature of a big thing depends upon the nature of the little things of which it is composed. Any advance in the self-knowledge and self-control of individuals cannot fail to be followed by a corresponding improvement in the self-knowledge and self-control of the communities to which they belong.

On such a large scale are our difficulties and troubles to-day, that many men and women incline to despair. At a time when 'democracy' is so much talked of, it almost seems that the power of the individual to make any effective difference to what is going on in the world was never smaller than now. Immediately and practically, that may be so. But in the long run, each of us can make effective contribution not only to the present but also to the future, by learning to understand and to control our own nature. If our nation consisted of individuals, each of whom had been trained, or had trained himself, in self-understanding and self-mastery, then the bigger problems would be simplified.

To understand one's self, and to gain control of the primitive instincts always working in us in ways we often do not even suspect, is a great step towards good citizenship. To pass on to children in our care the same understanding and the same control is a vital contribution to future citizenship. It may well be that this endeavour is the most practical service we can give to the future stability and welfare of our nation – and of the world.

Bibliography

Endocrine Man, by L. R. Broster (Heinemann).

Comprehensive, yet written in a style within the understanding of the 'ordinary reader', this is a study of human behaviour, especially of the activity of the glandular and central nervous systems. Concludes with an examination of the possible future evolution of Mankind.

How to Win Friends and Influence People, by Dale Carnegie.

The 'classic' volume on human relations, this gives an impression of such over-simplification that many may feel themselves disinclined to persevere with its method – *but it works!*

Self, by Michael Dillon (Heinemann).

A brilliant little book, aimed to explore the inter-action of Body and Mind and, therefore, also of Spirit. It includes an especially interesting outline of the incidence and effects of sexual abnormality, treated with humanity and wisdom.

How the Mind Works, Symposium, By Prof. Cyril Burt, Dr Ernest Jones, Dr E. Miller, Dr W. Moodie; edited by Sir Cyril Burt (Allen & Unwin).

Originally made public as broadcast talks, these essays cover very wide ground, including examination of the Conscious Mind, the Unconscious Mind, the Child Mind, and the Psychology of the Sexes, of Nations, and of various fields of human activity.

Women and Men, by Amram Scheinfeld (Chatto & Windus).

This is probably the most comprehensive study yet published of the effects of sexuality upon the life of the individual and of the community. Illustrated by a number of clever and illuminating tables and diagrams.

The Psychology of Childhood to Maturity, by J. Guilfoyle Williams (Heinemann).

A broad outline, easily understandable to the general reader, of human development from childhood into adult life. It examines many problems of emotion and conduct, and provides answers to many of the questions.

EUSTACE CHESSER'S

GROW UP–AND LIVE

PH 13

This companion volume to *Successful Living* has been written to help boys and girls to accommodate themselves to the world in which they are growing up. It deals clearly, coolly and sympathetically with such problems as friendship, sex, the clash between personal and social motives, the need for something more than a material view of life, attitudes to parents, teachers, and plans for the future. It will go far to lessen the bewilderment of young people as they leave behind the acquiescent spirit of childhood and pass, with minds full of enquiry, into the bustling pressure of the grown-up world. The curious mind of the adolescent will be prompted by this wise book to ask the right questions. Parents, teachers, and social workers will welcome *Grow Up – and Live* for the guidance it offers in finding effective approaches to young minds.

GRAMASEVAKS TRAINING CENTRE
16 APR 1955
T. KALLUPATTI

PENGUIN HANDBOOKS

Dr Eustace Chesser is a medical practitioner and psychologist in London and lectures on psychological subjects and on various aspects of marriage guidance. He was one of the founders of the Society for Sex Education and Guidance, of which he is still the Honorary Secretary. He has published a number of books including *Love Without Fear*, *Marriage and Freedom*, *Unwanted Child*, *Children by Choice*, and *Sexual Behaviour: Normal and Abnormal*. He is joint author of *The Practice of Sex Education*, a guide for parents and teachers, and, with Olive Hawks, *Life Lies Ahead*. Several of his books have also been published in the United States and European countries. His *Grow Up – And Live* has also appeared as a Penguin Handbook.